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THE MYTH OF SELF-INTEREST

Michael J. Himes & Kenneth R. Himes

What Will Jackson Do?

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

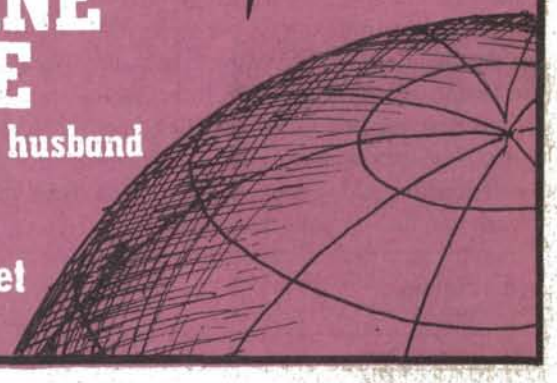
Religious Booknotes

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

MADELINE & ERNIE

"I'm Jewish, my husband is Catholic . . ."

Madeline Marget



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CORRESPONDENCE

Remembering 'Humanae vitae'

READERS RESPOND

Felix culpa

Bayside, N.Y.

To the Editors: After *Humanae vitae*, no one can underestimate or trivialize the often enormous anguish of both those who remained on the Bark of Peter and those who jumped ship. Not attempting to be a theological Pollyanna, may I suggest that Paul VI's tragic mistake can have beneficial consequences for individual Catholics and for the church at large.

A papal fundamentalism, especially on the part of American Catholics, has begun to fade. Rome cannot be viewed as an ecclesiastical automat into which problems are put and answers dished out. . . . Many liberal Catholics so extolled *Quadragesimo anno* and *Rerum novarum* as modern gospel that they forgot *Pascendi* and *Testem benevolentiae* as medieval death rattles. We are now reminded that not every document from Rome or the pope is an infallible teaching; popes can sometimes be anachronistic as well as prophetic.

Loyal and mature Catholics are beginning to realize excessive ultramontane tendencies are as harmful to the universal church as are rejections of the unique Petrine mission. The necessary dialogue and dialectic among the papal, episcopal, and congregational dimensions of our trinitarian-structured church are essential ingredients of a people constantly growing in the awareness of what revelation means in and to each age.

. . . *Humanae vitae* may have been one dramatic force impelling us to shed a one-sided and monolithic papalism just as the experience of Gallicanism helps us to avoid excessively nationalistic local churches; recent unbridled congregationalism as expressed in a dogmatic and anti-intellectual pentecostalism will warn us that no one element of the church's structure can be either unchecked or ignored.

The church is a complex body, not a simple amoeba; differentiation and specialization are part of the complexity. Simplistic ecclesiastical fundamentalism is as harmful to faith as is scriptural fundamentalism. FRANK C. ARRICALE

Comparative risks

Lackawanna, N.Y.

To the Editors: When in your editorial [July 15] you speak of the sense of asceticism and the obedience of the "Other couples far smaller in number" who have accepted the *Humanae vitae* precepts, you seem to overlook those couples who have acted not out of asceticism nor obedience but out of a firm conviction that artificial contraception is wrong and who have kept the faith according to their convictions. Will no one speak for them?

The risk this minority of couples took was the loss of satisfaction they might have had if they had enjoyed sex without restriction. They could measure this loss against the losses that fall on others: the crippled, the handicapped, the unlucky.

Your risk is greater. If you can suppose that you are wrong (and some very respectable and even saintly people firmly believe that you are wrong—see Mother Teresa's stern declaration; the *Tablet*, April 23, 1988) you run a very great risk, when all truth is known, the risk of a sad and harrowing contrition. Good luck. JOHN J. SULLIVAN, JR.

A dissenter recants

Roxbury, Mass.

To the Editors: The twentieth anniversary of *Humanae vitae* has inspired negative comments ranging from "tragic error" [the Editors] to "intellectual scandal" ["How Odd of God," by Robert Hoyt, July 15]. I would like to express a dissenting view.

In 1967 I was a delegate to the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome. I assisted Barbara Ward and others on the wording of a resolution that urged the church to "leave the choice of technical means for achieving responsible parenthood to the parents, acting in accordance with their Christian faith." So I was not always a dissenter from the current conventional wisdom. True, the phrase about "Christian faith" (my contribution) implied some ambiguity, but the intent was clear. It was a pro-pill, anti-abortion resolution, and it passed the Assembly of Heads of Delegations by a vote of 67 to 21, with 10 abstentions.

We have now had twenty years to observe the effects of "the contraceptive mentality" (your contribution) that vote represented. Paul VI, an intelligent man not given to willful expressions of blind reaction, ignored the vote and the advice of even more expert authorities and a few months later launched *Humanae vitae* into the teeth of what soon became a negative gale. One must admire his courage, if nothing else. I am one who is now ready to consider the possibility that I should be admiring his wisdom. At the

(Continued on page 505)

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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXV, Number 16

Correspondence	482
Editorials	483
Jessica Powers—Out of silence, music: *Dolores R. Leckey*	485
What will Jackson do?: *Wilson Carey McWilliams*	486
Truth & its consequences: *Holly Burkhalter & Jean-Marie Simon*	488
It's hard to believe: *John Garvey*	489
Madeline & Ernie: *Madeline Marget*	491
The myth of self-interest: *Michael J. Himes & Kenneth R. Himes*	493
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	498
Poetry: *Anne Porter*	500
Little Gidding—'Where prayer has been valid': *Mary Frances Coady*	501

BOOKS

Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism/A Fighting Chance: *James Turner Johnson*	502
Revelation: *Fanny Howe*	504
Books for Believers: *David Toolan*	505
Religious Booknotes: *Lawrence S. Cunningham*	507

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Whose Jesus?

We, too, went out to see what all the commotion was about. We didn't have to go as far as the Judaean desert; we found the crowds at the Ziegfeld Theater, a short subway ride away in the canyons of Manhattan, gathered there for a screening of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

The mere act of entering the Ziegfeld proved as bracing as some of the film's more unsettling scenes. The line we joined was the veritable New York melting pot—with every race, age, faith, and gender represented. We made our way through a labyrinth of police barricades, security forces, and protesters. "Turn back before it is too late," declared a leaflet with a Pat Buchanan attack on the film. We didn't. But by the time we got through the theater's doors and found a seat, we felt the Final Trumpet might not be long in sounding. Adrenalin was running so high, in fact, that a bomb threat might have come as a relief. But tolerance and efficiency prevailed inside, and once the film began, the audience was immediately and intensely attentive.

What, indeed, had all these people on the banks of Sixth Avenue come out to see?

In his quest for the historical Jesus, Albert Schweitzer wrote, "each successive epoch [has] found its own thoughts in Jesus," that each of us creates him "in accordance with one's own character." As the tempest over *The Last Temptation* shows, we are no exception. More important, both the film and the controversy signal a moment for scrutinizing our own images and ideas of Jesus. Motion pictures are an unparalleled means of self-discovery and cultural understanding. As a focus of shared experience, some films offer a rare and important opportunity for mutual discovery. *The Last Temptation* is one of them.

Both as Christ-hero and Christ-sufferer, cornerstone and stone of contradiction, the image of Jesus is central to Western art and culture. The perennial effort to depict Jesus has let loose both imagination and instinct. From icons to holy cards, from movies to plastic statues, art has proved a remarkably independent force in shaping the Christian idea of Jesus—a matter, as Jaroslav Pelikan observes in *Jesus Through the Centuries* (Harper & Row), "too important . . . to be left only to the theologians and the church."

It is not the first, nor will Scorsese's *The Last Temptation* be the last attempt by an artist to deal with the beautiful, elusive, and demanding figure of Jesus. It is not even the only such effort to appear on the screen this summer. The crucifixion of Jesus plays a significant, if ancillary role, in *Pascali's Island*. Ben Kingsley, an Ottoman Turk, experiences the anti-Islamic feelings of the Orthodox Greeks, whose Good Friday service he has been forced to attend in his capacity as a guide. The piercing eyes of the reproachful Jesuses of the iconostasis send Kingsley into a terrifying nightmare in which he is crucified by his Christian tormentors. In this brief dream

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segment, the film graphically telescopes the pogroms and religious wars that we easily forget are also part of our religious history.

Neither will *The Last Temptation* be the last occasion for questions and controversy about the person of Jesus and the roots of our religious beliefs. Some people feel they have had enough of the movie industry's mocking or patronizing treatment of religious beliefs, persons, and practices. For them Scorsese's treatment of Jesus' life is but another example. For some, *Temptation* is another outrageous instance of an ongoing attack on the moral fabric of society itself. Others take the film more personally, as an assault on the substance of their own deepest-held beliefs. The *Wall Street Journal* (August 11) advised these folks that they "probably should avoid this picture" because the temptation scene in particular, while tame by today's movie standards, is still "quite vivid."

We do not share these objections (see *Commonweal, September 9*) nor offer that advice. But the movie does present serious theological problems whose challenge should not be evaded out of either a desire to stay clear of people who favor censoring the movie or a condescending appreciation for Scorsese's sincerity. For example, relying on Nikos Kazantzakis's novel, Scorsese heightens tension by simultaneously utilizing and distorting elements of the New Testament. Nowhere is this distortion more evident than in his representation of Paul of Tarsus. Paul is here transformed into a religious con man, his actual words and historical convictions turned upside down. This interpretation plays to the view that Paul knows better than Jesus what Jesus is all about; that Paul, not Jesus, is the real founder of Christianity.

Another problem of a theological sort: God is not mocked, the Ziegfeld protesters insisted. But Jesus was. Which raises the deeper question about the nature of our redemption and salvation. Why and how was the Messiah allowed to suffer? The movie isn't much help here: despite the outcries about the all-too-humanness of Scorsese's Jesus, this Jesus is never a deeply convincing or inspiring human figure, and in that context his death on the cross makes no sense. Nor does the God who leads him there, a God who seems to require human degradation to appeaase his own ill-defined anger. The suffering of Jesus of Nazareth, on the other hand, of which the Passion was only one element, demonstrates how deep and tightly entwined is the bond between heaven and earth. It reveals not an avenging, scornful deity, but the incarnate, redeemer God, full of compassion and responsive to creation's deepest groanings.

But what about those believers the *Journal* advises to protect themselves from the movie? Doesn't avoidance finally amount to capitulation? We would do better to engage in vigorous debate those writers, theologians, and artists who most challenge our beliefs. We may even learn something unexpected from them about the imageless but living God. Maimonides taught that "the most perfect development" of the imaginative faculty was in fact prophecy—the power to challenge our own behavior and our own idols. Scorsese's treatment of Paul, for all of its shortcomings, not only exposes a facet of contemporary religious hypocrisy illustrated by the travails of several TV evangelists; but "Paul's" denial of the Christ-message brings each viewer face to face with the most demanding question Jesus asks each of us: "And who do *you* say that I am?" Perhaps, finally, that is why—in contrast to the protesters outside—the audience that left the Ziegfeld was remarkably reflective, almost subdued.

It had witnessed not only a man's temptation but his torture. The controversial temptation scene is in fact a hallucination induced by the Romans' officially sanctioned authoritarian brutality. If we find such inhumanity revolting or even blasphemous, we ought to ponder its widespread prevalence in our time and our lack of protest against *it*.

John Damascene (d. 750), in the midst of the iconoclast controversy, recommended that artists "draw pictures and set forth, for all to see, him who has chosen to let himself be seen." But as Pelikan notes in his discussion of that fierce period, "The humanity of Jesus depicted in the icons . . . was a humanity suffused with the presence of divinity. . . . " If today it is difficult to render faithfully or effectively a sense of that divinity, is it because we have debased our humanity? Scorsese, whatever his artistic failures and theological limitations, has at least attempted to bridge that great divide.

GOOD SENSE PREVAILS

Loma Linda Hospital in California has acquired a reputation for the fantastic and terrifying. It was here that Baby Fay was transplanted with the heart of a baboon back in 1984. It was here that the heart of an anencephalic infant was transplanted into an infant with a defective heart in the autumn of 1987 (*Commonweal*, January 15, 1988). The success of this latter effort led the hospital to set up a research program to see whether anencephalic infants (infants born only with brain stems), who otherwise die very shortly after birth, would prove to be a dependable source of transplantable organs for other infants. After entering twelve infants into the research protocol, the hospital and the chief of its neonatology unit, Dr. Joyce Peabody, have announced the suspension of the program. That no transplantable organs have come from their efforts would seem to have counted a great deal in the decision. However, Dr. Peabody in a remarkable press conference (*Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1988) reported other reasons for suspending the program, including the emotional reactions of her staff in caring for these dying infants, a growing sense that they were on a slippery slope when requests were made to enter other, non-anencephalic infants in the program, and the fear that respirating anencephalic infants would promote their survival in a vegetative state.

Though we believe there are other legal and ethical reasons to bar this practice, Dr. Peabody's will do for the moment. We hope her good sense prevails and the program is not simply suspended but ended.

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A BETTER COURSE

In response to the Vatican statement on homosexuality published in October 1986, a number of bishops in the U.S. instructed the priests of their dioceses to withdraw support for the group of gay and lesbian Catholics known as Dignity. In Brooklyn, for example, Dignity would no longer be allowed to use church buildings for meetings or group-sponsored liturgies. Dignity members, however, were encouraged to attend regularly scheduled Masses, and Bishop Francis Mugavero instructed they be fully welcomed "within the community of Christ."

It seemed at the time—in light of the fearsome consequences of AIDS, the regrettable language used in the Vatican instruction which appeared to countenance violence against homosexuals, and the positive achievements of Dignity itself—that a more creative avenue for dealing with the situation ought to have been possible.

Until recently, one such alternative avenue seemed to be emerging in Chicago. For more than seventeen years, first under the auspices of the Legion of Mary and then under the sponsorship of Dignity/Chicago, a Sunday Mass specifically for gay and lesbian Catholics had been offered at St. Sebastian Church. For the last two-and-a-half years as well, the pastors of five Chicago parishes have met to assure that the St. Sebastian liturgy continue as an essential element of the pastoral ministry of the archdiocese. In the mind of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, to have canceled the Mass at St. Sebastian would have constituted "a serious pastoral mistake." Nevertheless, there is a tension inherent in all interest-group Masses. There can be a tendency to become self-absorbed or atomized, and thus ultimately separated from communion with the broader worshiping community of which the group is a part. This

Jessica Powers: Out of silence, music

It was a funeral full of poems. On August 18, 1988 poet Jessica Powers, aged eighty-three, her spirit "newly freed from earth" entered into her homecoming, as one of her poems describes the experience of death. For forty-seven years she lived as Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit in the Carmel of the Mother of God, first in Milwaukee and later in Pewaukee. There, in silence and solitude she explored the secrets of the soul and fashioned those secrets into poems notable for their metaphysical truth and arresting images. It was these poems that echoed through the homily, the thanksgiving, the graveside prayers, and the memories of those who had gathered to say good-by to her.

Jessica Powers was born on a farm in Mauston, Wisconsin in 1905. She studied for a year at Marquette University, worked as a secretary in Chicago, went back to work on the farm after her mother's death, and eventually, in 1936, made her way to New York City, attracted by the intellectual stimulation of the city and the artistic support of the newly formed Catholic Poetry Society of America. For a while she lived with Dr. Anton Pegis and his wife, also a writer. The women shared domestic duties and care for the Pegis's small children, so enabling one another to enjoy uninterrupted blocks of writing time. Her New York years honed Jessica Powers's unique poetic gifts. They also awakened her slumbering vocation to religious life. In 1941, she left the bright lights of New York for the enclosure of Carmel. But she didn't go alone. The Muse followed and remained with her in the cloister for forty-seven years. Her publications include several volumes of poetry, the most recent being *The House at Rest;* an extensive collection is presently in the works.

During her lifetime, Jessica Powers's work appeared in *Poetry, Spirit, Harper's Magazine,* the *New York Times, America,* the *Washington Post,* and *Commonweal,* which published more than fifty of her poems, before and after her entrance into Carmel. "For a Silent Poet" appeared in *Commonweal* in 1940:

Song was a wild bird and it came unbidden.
  It settled down across the darkened air
To a gray branch in a dull orchard hidden.
  One morning it was there.

Feathers of luster and a polished beak,
  You cried in your delight, what is this bird
That in one space of music seems to speak
  The note and the note's word?

It came from meadows seasonless and boundless
  Into your orchard for a summer stay,
And then one night you saw it lift on soundless
  White wings and float away.

Weep not that visit of a brief duration.
  You are a guest yourself and you must know
That in you lie the instincts of migration,
  And where the bird went, one day you will go.

Not even the grave can render Jessica Powers a silent poet. Her mystic songs go on.

DOLORES R. LECKEY

Dolores R. Leckey is executive director of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat on Laity and Family Life. She is writing a biography of Jessica Powers.

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penchant constitutes an equally grave, self-defeating mistake. To forestall such an occurrence while assuring the continuity of the special Mass at St. Sebastian, and in light of an increasingly critical stance on the part of Dignity's national leaders toward the church's teaching on homosexual practice, in May Cardinal Bernardin instructed the Chicago parishes themselves to coordinate sponsorship of the Mass. Instead of accepting this solution, the local Dignity chapter split over the issue, the majority voting to move the Mass to the premises of another denomination.

The sad fact is that for the moment the house being put in order appears to be in a worse state than before. But that in no way should detract from the wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin and the Chicago pastors. By maintaining the special liturgy at St. Sebastian under a wide parochial sponsorship, they have not only managed to keep the welcome mat firmly in place. More importantly, they have provided a generous table to return to.

A REAL CAMPAIGN

A good issue nowadays is hard to find, especially when the media have heard it all before hundreds of times. The dog-like chomp-and-hold of TV and print reporters on Dan Quayle's National Guard enlistment dominated the post-convention campaign news. With that wrung out, other nonissues are avidly being covered: Has Dukakis lost momentum? Will Ed Koch and Jesse Jackson stay in harness together? Should the Pledge of Allegiance be carved on the candidates' chests? foreheads?

This kind of coverage debases the political process. It also helps the Republicans, who as incumbents have the most to gain from issue-dodging.

Now that the campaign is in full tilt, Americans should insist that major issues be discussed and debated, by both candidates, in some detail and at some length. Here is our preliminary list:

What about the budget deficit? Having lost its place as the world's largest creditor and now firmly established as the world's largest debtor, the U.S. is living on borrowed money and borrowed time. Just how do the candidates propose to rein in the deficit? There are few options, none of them particularly popular: a variety of possible tax hikes; freezes and cuts in defense and domestic programs. What plans are there for raising revenue? Higher productivity? User fees? Selling Hawaii to the Japanese? It may still be political suicide for a presidential contender to mention the "T" word, but no candidate can be taken seriously who promises economic stability but fails to lay out what drastic measures lie ahead.

What about drug abuse? Will border patrols, more powerful weapons for police, a "just-say-no" moral campaign, diplomatic carrot-and-stick policies really work—even if all are implemented together? If not, what will? Is a cabinet-level drug czar part of the answer? If so, what will be that individual's role and what powers will he or she have? How can the president attack the drug problem at its core: pervasive domestic demand?

What about foreign policy and the U.S. penchant for single-handed action? Has either candidate viable plans for cooperative action with regional parties and allies in Central America and the Persian Gulf? Serious people in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact are joined in substantive discussion on *conventional* arms reductions: what are the candidates' positions? The Middle East begs for serious and sustained diplomatic action. Does either candidate dare offer a plan?

What about pressing domestic needs? Affordable housing and effective primary and secondary education? What about soaring health-care costs? The shortage of nurses? The impact of AIDS on its victims and on the entire health-care system?

What will the U.S. do to clean up the environment? Acid rain, polluted air and water, chemicals in our soil, and the depletion of ozone threaten to destroy our forests, farm land, the health of our citizens and that of our neighbors. Where do the candidates stand on raising auto emission standards, implementing tougher controls on coal burning? Promoting conservation and renewable sources of energy? Bringing back nuclear energy?

It's time to have a real political campaign.

POLITICS FOR THE LONG HAUL

WHAT WILL JACKSON DO?
THE PARADOXES OF SUCCESS

Prophet or specter, Jesse Jackson will shadow the Democrats into the next century. He was the dominating presence in Atlanta, as he had been throughout the campaign for the nomination, holding the media as well as the delegates under his spell. Cameras caressed him, commentators speculated about his feeling and intentions. The great question at the Democratic Convention was not, "Who will we nominate?" but "What will Jesse do?" It is a question that Democrats, and Americans generally, can expect to be asking for a long time.

Despite a few intoxicating moments, there never was a chance that Jackson would be on the Democratic ticket this year. His realistic aim was not nomination but legitimation and Jackson's success can be measured in his oozy anointing by virtually every Democratic leader who spoke in Atlanta.

Jackson could afford to be a good soldier: a relatively young man, he will be candidate material for twenty years. His talents, like his ambitions, are suited to the long haul. Jesse Jackson is that political rarity, a master of both the old and the new politics. His rhetoric is overpraised, but it does combine the ability to stir a crowd with the short quotabilities ("sound

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bites") beloved by television news. While Jackson became a media celebrity, his supporters dominated delegate selection in almost every caucus state except Iowa (including Alaska, of all places). Jackson set out to build local organizations and a national image, and to a considerable extent, he succeeded in both goals. He will be a leading Democratic contender in 1992 or 1996, depending on Dukakis's fortunes. It looks like a good bet that eventually he will be nominated and almost a sure thing that he will win a place on the ticket. But this sort of prediction is something of a crap-shoot. The road to the presidential nomination is full of potholes.

Already, Jackson is being urged to run for public offices—the Senate, in South Carolina, or the mayoralty, in Chicago—or, if Dukakis wins, to accept a position in the new administration. Success in any public trust would strengthen Jackson's claims on the presidency, answering the charge that he is only a speechifier. At the same time, any public office would tie Jackson to specific policies and accountabilities, to committees, compromises, and administrative details, and it would also expose him to the risk of failure. Despite these dangers, it is doubtful that Jackson can stand aside: having made his career as a critic of establishments, Jackson needs to prove that he is equal to the burden of authority.

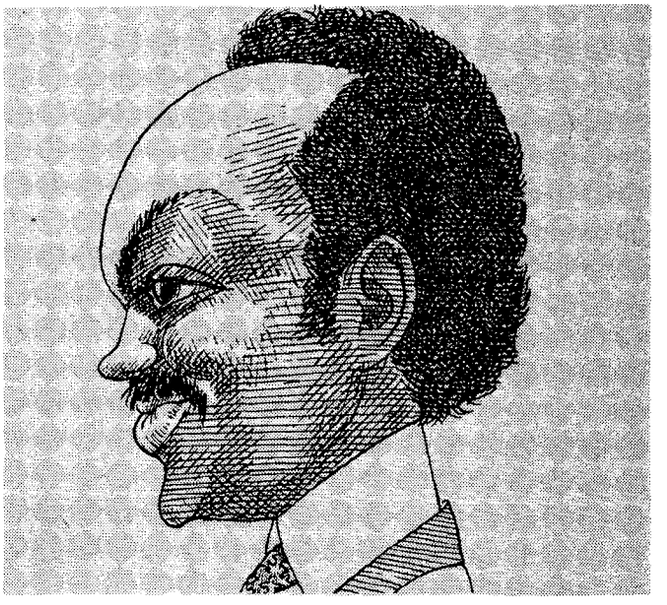
The next time Jackson runs for the presidency, after all, he will be subject to more criticism than in the past. In 1984, and for all but a few weeks in 1988, Democratic candidates assumed that Jackson could not be the nominee and that the real contest involved others. Jackson was treated gingerly, as a power to be feared, but not as a serious rival. That has changed: in the future, Democratic candidates are likely to jockey for the position Dukakis achieved this year, as the leading alternative to Jackson.

Paradoxically, Jackson's very successes reduced the power of black votes in one decisive respect. White Democratic candidates virtually conceded the black vote to Jackson and did little to cultivate it. Since Jackson's nomination was never a real possibility, black voters played *no* role in the selection of the eventual nominee. (In 1984, by contrast, Walter Mondale probably owed his nomination to the support he received from a respectable minority of blacks, particularly in the South.) In 1988, this may not have mattered much, since all the Democratic candidates were more or less acceptable to black voters. It is not clear, however, that blacks will be as indifferent in the future.

Be that as it may, the stronger any future Jackson candidacy proves to be, the closer the scrutiny to which Jackson's views and character will be subjected. He can count on being treated respectfully, but the free ride is over. Jackson's ego will be an issue, and there will be questions about his conduct in the aftermath of King's assassination. The suspicion of anti-Semitism will nag him, even if—as Jackson feels—such aspersions are unfair. He can expect his domestic programs to be dissected, and he had better be less sciolistic in his view of international affairs. He would be wise to curb his penchant for personal diplomacy, which has taken him into more than one political minefield. Jackson will need discipline and craft because his political position has serious weaknesses, in practice and in theory.

Another master of oratory and political organization, William Jennings Bryan, won the Democratic nomination three times and, more important, changed the shape of American party politics. But Bryan's hand was stronger than Jackson's. Bryan's constituents held something like a balance of power between the parties. Back then, reformers and agrarian radicals had no clear affinity for either the Republicans or the Democrats, and Bryan could argue plausibly that many progressive voters would defect to the GOP unless the Democrats met his demands. (They did just that in 1904, when the Democrats chose Alton Parker, a moderate conservative, to run against Theodore Roosevelt.) Jackson has no such advantage: his "progressive coalition" does not float between the parties; it is the extreme wing of the Democratic party. Jackson can threaten that, if he is denied, many of his supporters will stay home or support third parties. He cannot pretend that they will vote Republican. But the conservative and moderate Democrats who are offended by Jackson are likely to vote Republican, so that the mathematics of elections works in favor of Jackson's enemies: since a voter alienated by Jackson is likely to amount to a loss of one vote for the Democrats *and* a gain of one by the Republicans, the voters attracted by Jackson, a Democratic gain but no Republican loss, are only half as potent as those he offends.

At the same time, Jackson cannot take his supporters for granted. Disillusionment stalks inspiration: if Jackson turns toward the center, hoping to broaden his coalition, he will be—is being—accused of betrayal; if his candidacy falters, he will be called noble but ineffective, a leader who has had his day. Rival black leaders, restive under Jackson's preeminence, may be tempted to try candidacies of their own, and the "rainbow coalition" has other internal tensions. Jackson is adroit enough to overcome such difficulties, but they strain his resources and limit his freedom of maneuver.



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At bottom, however, Jackson's case does not rest on such calculations but on the claim that he provides moral leadership. "Authentic leaders do not follow opinion polls, they mold opinion. They set a moral tone, define priorities, and forge a mandate for change." Yet while Jackson quickens his audiences to the promise of politics, his own teaching, closely examined, seems indifferent to the higher, sometimes tragic dimensions of political life.

Farmers, workers, mothers, students, blacks, Hispanics, gays and lesbians are "right" in their claims, Jackson told the Democratic Convention, but can prevail only "when we bring the patches together." In this sensible plea for party unity, however, Jackson did not acknowledge that there is likely to be conflict between the goals of this diverse coalition, requiring the sacrifice of some hopes and goals on behalf of more fundamental principles. In fact, when Jackson did refer to political beliefs, he appeared to deny that there *are* any beliefs which are intrinsically worthy or—to use the old language—naturally right. "Conservatives and progressives," he said, are right "when you fight for what you believe," although here too, each should know that "your patch isn't big enough." In other words, good conscience—fighting "for what you believe"—hallows any cause, but in practice, one must be willing to compromise. In these terms, Jackson's doctrine amounts to a debased version of liberalism, in which right is reduced to personal authenticity, modified by calculations of utility.

When Jackson speaks of politics as a "moral arena where people come together to find common ground," he means that politics is a space in which citizens can act morally according to their *private* lights, not one which has a public moral character. Jerusalem was "blessed," Jackson said in Atlanta, "because it provided a crossroads where different cultures and different civilizations could meet and find common ground." This pluralistic image may be attractive, but it is emphatically not biblical: in the Scriptures, Jerusalem is blessed only to the extent that it is a culturally homogeneous community, a city of *one* God, not many. And while Christianity embraced many peoples, it did so in the name of the one King. In more secular terms, would Jackson really want to argue that contemporary Jerusalem is "blessed" because of its "different cultures and civilizations"? Biblical teaching and political practice unite in indicating that simple "inclusiveness" is a false standard, and that the political good presumes some first-ruling principles. That view of politics is nobler than Jackson's, and also more severe, since wrong is the corollary of right: for Democrats and for Americans, racism is an unacceptable teaching, to be so labeled whether it is voiced by Botha or Farrakhan. Governor Dukakis had the grace to invoke John Winthrop, who taught that a common faith is the foundation of political community. Looking to a longer term, Jesse Jackson has even more reason to see to the foundations of his politics. □

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

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REPORT FROM GUATEMALA

TRUTH & ITS CONSEQUENCES

WHO WILL LISTEN?

Last May, the parish priest of Chichicastenango organized a special Mass for the victims of political violence in his Guatemalan highland community. What happened as a result illustrates the weakness of Guatemala's civilian democratic government and the need for continued international pressure to protect human rights.

Father Ventura Lux Herrera said that he had expected 400 to 500 people to attend the special Mass; he was astonished when 1,800 Indian widows showed up. As they placed their offerings on the altar—a tomato, a weaving, a few coins—the women told their stories. The Guatemalan army had killed or "disappeared" their relatives in the counterinsurgency campaign of the early 1980s. One widow's testimony captured the anguish of the group: "My heart aches. Our husbands died. Why? Why did they kill them? They weren't to blame for anything. We can't survive. Our pain has not gone away. The army represses us. Who will listen? We have no one who listens. I hope that God gives us life."

The Mass, with its gathering of widows and outpouring of grief, was unprecedented in Guatemala, but the women's experience was far from unique. Nearly every one of the sixty-seven hamlets around Chichicastenango has thirty-five to forty widows. Nationwide, the figures are even more shocking. The Guatemalan Supreme Court's Juvenile Division conducted a census of highland orphans in 1985 and found some 150,000 to 200,000. From this, the court determined that 45,000 to 60,000 highland Indian parents had been killed from 1978 to 1985.

The reign of terror imposed by the Guatemalan army devastated highland life. The army boasts of having wiped 440 villages off the map in a counterinsurgency campaign that included thousands of targeted executions and disappearances, indiscriminate bombings, and wholesale massacres. Some 100,000 Indians fled into Mexico. At least half a million more, according to the Guatemalan Bishops' Conference, were uprooted from their ancestral homes and communities and became refugees within their own country, swelling the slums of Guatemala City. Some 70,000 were forcibly relocated by the army into squalid "model villages" where they were required to undergo "reeducation" and, to this day, are closely watched by the military and prohibited from traveling freely. As many as 600,000 rural men and boys are still required to provide onerous unpaid services to the army in a vast network of civilian patrols. They serve as informers on their own communities, and, occasionally, as untrained and poorly armed combatants against guerrilla attacks. The civil patrols

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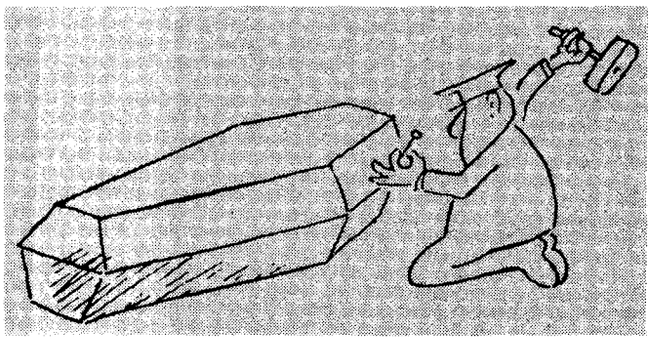
also provide an unpaid labor force for military projects such as bridge and road building.

When the Guatemalan army permitted the election of a civilian president in 1985, Guatemalans and others around the world hoped that the long nightmare had ended. President Vinicio Cerezo, a Christian Democrat who himself had suffered death threats and attacks, took office with 68 percent of the popular vote. Yet today, the military's domination of rural life seems as complete as ever. The civil patrol system is intact, though renamed in Orwellian fashion "Voluntary Civil Defense Committees." Communities that resist "voluntary" participation have suffered military reprisals, including killings and disappearances. The model villages remain under military control. Thousands of additional displaced civilians have been forced out of their mountain refuges, interrogated by the army and subjected to prolonged military indoctrination. Military operations continue against an elusive guerrilla force numbering 2,000 at most; according to Guatemalan City Archbishop Prośpero Penados, aerial bombings of civilian communities have been reported in two highland departments.

As for Father Lux, the military seems determined to punish him for the service he held for his congregation of widows. The priest foresaw the danger to the women for giving their testimonies. In an interview last month, he said, "As the widows talked, I thought to myself, there is no doubt that this is going to cause persecution later on, because they are telling the truth. When you lie, nothing happens afterwards, but when you tell the truth, it is certain that there will be reprisals. I even had to stop them in some places; I was afraid." On July 26, a large crowd of civil patrolmen burst into a Mass at which Father Lux was expected to preside, claimed the microphone,



and broke up the service. Father Lux had already fled and is now in hiding. But neither he nor the widows who spoke at the service are safe from reprisals.

"Who will listen?" Sadly, no U.S. policymakers. The Reagan administration has long sought to restore close ties to the Guatemalan armed forces, which were severed in the 1970s because of human rights violations. Members of Congress who previously denounced military repression in Guatemala and prohibited aid have supported military aid to Guatemala for a different reason: they seek to reward President Cerezo for his important contribution to the Central American peace process. And both the Congress and the State Department appear to be using military assistance to reward the military for permitting a civilian president to remain in office. Such a policy puts symbols over substance and honors declarations over deeds.

HOLLY BURKHALTER & JEAN-MARIE SIMON

Holly Burkhalter is Washington representative of Human Rights Watch and Jean-Marie Simon is a consultant to Americas Watch.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE

NOTES FROM THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS

People who are believers sometimes face a condescension, disguised as a kind of compliment, from people who are not believers. It takes the form of statements which usually go something like this: "I wish I were a believer; it must be a great consolation." Occasionally this may be sincerely meant, but more often it is intended to imply something else: as consoling as it may be to believe in a loving God, the nonbeliever says, I prefer the more bracing and courageous task of facing cruel reality. I have learned to live without the consolations of an illusion, lonely as life at this difficult height may be.

The problem I have here is not so much with the condescension as with wondering what can be meant by consolation. Belief does lead us to see, or at least hope for, an ultimate meaning in life. That might be seen as more consoling than a vision of life which sees all of our love and all of our suffering as meaningless. But a vision of life which sees meaning primarily as something we invest in a neutral reality has its own consolations, one of which is the consolation of seeing oneself in control—a limited control, but all meaning and understanding is to be found within those limits. The believer, on the other hand, is bound to obedience to a God who is unknowable, hardly a comforting direction. Christians see that the God of love did not answer the prayer of his son, who asked to be delivered from torment. The story of Gethsemane, which tells us that the soul of the Word made flesh "was filled with dismay and dread," presents us with little consolation.

The idea of religion as consolation is sometimes accepted too eagerly by believers themselves, but it wears thin. It doesn't work, as the parents of children who have died know when well-meaning and stupid people tell them that their

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child is happy now in heaven. The grief of a believer may indeed be different in some way from the grief of a nonbeliever, but it is no less terrible.

Belief does make a difference, though, in the way we respond to grief and dread. I recently met a family whose experience with something terrible seems to me to be a sign of that difference. Three years ago their two-year-old son was left in the care of a relative while they went to the hospital to be with their youngest child, who was undergoing a minor surgical procedure. The little boy was playing in a fenced-in back yard when a limb fell from a tree, hit him, and caused massive brain damage. He is five now, and requires constant attention: he needs physical therapy to keep his limbs from atrophy, and must be moved frequently to keep him from bedsores. He is fed through a tube in his stomach. He can respond to his parents' voices with a smile and with small sounds. He will be this way for as long as he lives, which may be quite a long time.

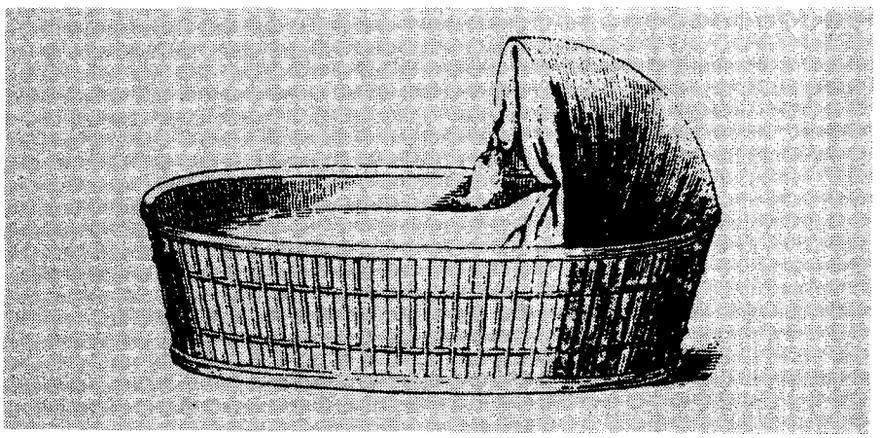
This is the thing most parents fear, a real nightmare. You can't raise your children in safe, concrete bunkers where nothing terrible will happen; this tragedy was absolutely unforeseeable. But the way in which this couple has responded is remarkable.

Their child continues to live with them and their three other children. The attention he demands is intense; because of the care he requires there are no ordinary vacations, and virtually no social life of the kind most of us take for granted. Many people would regard this as a life of extreme deprivation. No doubt there are times when it must feel to these parents, and to those closest to them, like an overwhelming task.

Still, while they accept it, they do not do so as if it were primarily a matter of accepting a burden. There is something much more than acceptance here. It is hard to put this into words, but the way they are with their son is so obviously a matter of love that, being around them, the sense you have of simple presence-in-love is a sacramental thing. I am sure they do not think of themselves as holy, or of what they do every day as a heroic vocation. They are doing what they believe they must do. And their son's life is, as a result, as full and complete as it is possible for it to be. Again, I have to say that this is very hard to put into words: but I felt, looking at him and at them, that there were depths here which are holy and a mystery of love which cannot be spoken about very well.

Diane Arbus photographed grotesque people and their families and was asked why she chose such disturbing subject matter. She said that most of us feared the terrible thing, and that our lives were spent in that fear. The people she photographed lived on the other side of the terrible thing; they knew what it was like. The idea that it could be lived through at all fascinated her, but there is more to life than getting through it.

The mystery these parents and their child present us with shows us something wonderful as well as terrible. The worst things can and do happen, and most of us are very happy to be on the lucky side of the dreadful things that could happen—but even here, and maybe, in a way we can't bear to look at, *especially* here, there is something about love which we need to know, which is lifegiving and sustaining and which leads us to understand, or at least to approach, Gethsemane, and the mystery of Jesus' weeping at the death of Lazarus.



Something in the zeitgeist would tell us that a child who has suffered such a trauma should be institutionalized, so that his family can get on with their lives. The idea that our lives can be wrapped in tragedy for a reason beyond our imagining is not part of this understanding. There are even people who would question whether this child's life is worth sustaining, who would argue about the comparative costs of feeding through a tube someone whose life is so unimportant in any social sense, someone who will not be productive (the measure here is apparently monetary), or who will not communicate the way book reviews and talk shows do—such a person hardly counts enough to receive the love which, thank God, he does receive, despite all of this.

A mystery of love and divine will lies in the fact that this boy is. It is the mystery which leads us to baptize infants, which tells us that God's relationship with this person is not as limited as our own. The moment this realization begins to be marginal among Christians we will have begun to betray an essential part of what it is we have been given as a vocation—the work of saying, and living as if it were so, that creation is holy, that what is is good, even where it is terribly wounded, and maybe especially there. When a secular environment allows us to make this a tentative, embarrassed concern, we ought to worry about ourselves. I think of some other people—an amazing woman I heard interviewed, a poor woman who has taken in children dying from AIDS; a man I know whose response to his own son's retardation is quiet dedication to the needs of other retarded people. These people shouldn't simply move us, though of course they do: they should, finally, be our teachers. Back to the idea of religion as something consoling: I remember a line from Simone Weil, who said somewhere that love is not consolation, it is light. □

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MADELINE & ERNIE

HONORING WHAT WE DO NOT SHARE

MADELINE MARGET

I am Jewish, my husband is Catholic, and for the fifteen years of our marriage religion has been important.

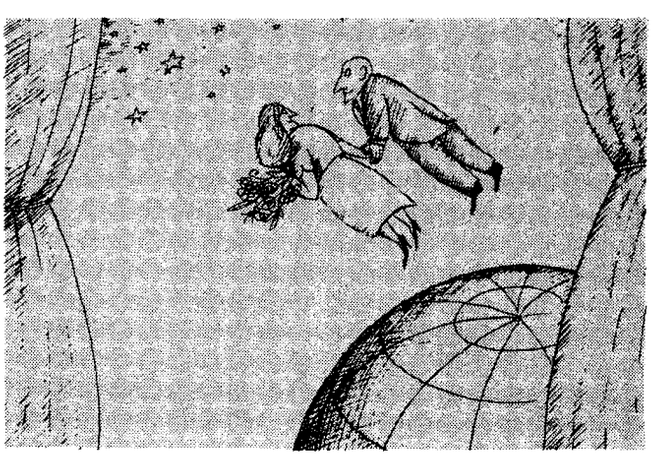
Ernie and I were, in the first place, bound together by youth. Specifically, by sexual attraction and our common idealism. On our first date, sitting outside on a hot night, we discussed the good life until two in the morning. There was the good that could be legislated—we'd each moved to Washington in order to help see to that. There were the satisfactions of raising a family. There was religion, I said. Ernie found that a very interesting statement. But because he was Catholic—a real one: a believer and a churchgoer—I put that subject aside. I wanted to find only that which I was sure we could share. We spent most of the night talking. He kissed me goodnight. A year later, we got married.

When I was a young teenager, our rabbi told my wise-guy religious school class that it didn't matter whether any of us believed in God or not. God existed, said the rabbi, regardless of what any of us thought. To an adolescent this was an unintelligible idea. To an adult it's a welcome one. My religious husband regularly reminds me of it. The point of faith, he says, is that you cannot know. The reasons for sadness and grief and confusion are not apparent, but they exist. Life has form and purpose; one acts on that understanding, even in the absence of evidence. As a result of this teaching I have, over the years, become an optimist. Not that Ernie, and life with him, can't be sour. Nor that I don't have plenty of lousy moods. But I believe in possibility. I think I can accomplish something worth doing, make an impact on the people around me and on those to come. I believe my children can, too, and I tell them so with assurance.

This confidence, in my life, is tied tightly to religion in two ways. First, it is an outgrowth of the fact that Ernie and I have to articulate what, in a more homogeneous union, would be implicit. Ernie is well-educated in his religion, and a reflective person. He is happy to discuss a question of ethics or mystery. He is always willing, and usually able, to see human beings as essentially good. Another reason I am able to act positively is Ernie's example. Not that I necessarily follow it: I am more forceful and emotional, more driven, than he. Ernie, the person I know most intimately— the example of humanity closest to me, and most constant—bears witness to his beliefs. Much of his life is an effort to act honestly, kindly, wisely. I know I can count on him to try to help me. More importantly, I try to credit other people—at least, the people to whom I'm drawn—with Ernie's virtues. Often, I find them, because my married life has taught me to look, and hope, for them.

When Ernie and I were married (in a Catholic ceremony where no one knelt, the sign of the cross was not made, and neither the word Jesus nor the word Christ was mentioned) the priest said we would be as one. We are not. In middle age we argue more than we used to. Where concrete, daily issues are concerned, stress supplies the fuel. Our disagreements about the practical are rare and shallow. In this realm, the choices are plain or need not be made: the only heat comes from worry over our children's normal problems, and juggling time and stretching money. We celebrate—secularly—both Christian and Jewish holidays.

The real differences between us are something else again. Those, we discuss calmly. Most of them stem from the fact Ernie is Catholic and I am Jewish. For years, Ernie and I alluded only to the cultural differences, which we ascribed, correctly, to geography and income as well as religious train-



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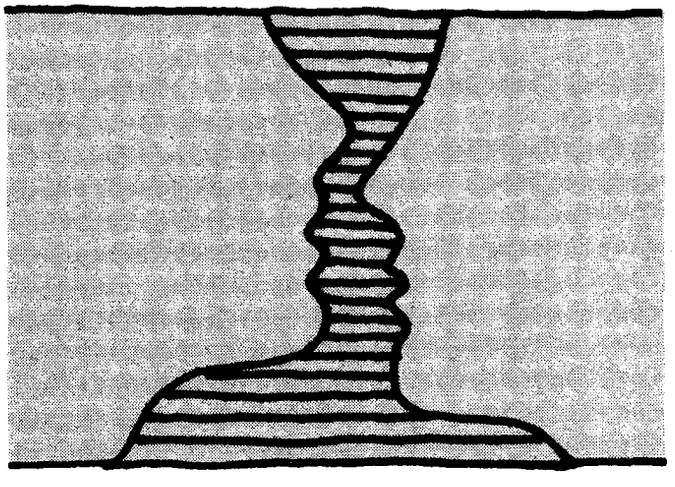
ing. Our expectations and views were different because of the way each of us was raised. Some of that, of course, is true. I am an easterner, Ernie's from the Midwest. My family had more money than his. He expected we would send our children to parochial schools; I was horrified at the idea. I assume that it's a middle-class child's birthright to learn how to swim with rhythmic breathing, and to suffer through piano lessons. Ernie raises an eyebrow, though he sees no harm in having such skills.

Talking about history and politics, our conversation, often, is heavier, confronting actual rifts. Generally this is the case not because Ernie is a Catholic, but because he is not a Jew. When, recently, a woman who had been Anne Frank's pen pal said it hadn't occurred to her that her correspondent was Jewish, and murdered by Hitler, until she was told, I was flabbergasted. Ernie was not. He knows most of the world is not Jewish, that most people do not carry with them, always, as Jews do, a fear of annihilation and a conscious pride in having survived the centuries with dignity and humanity. Still, our discussions about politics are generally our most amicable—both of us are liberal and progressive, and we both, still, believe government can right wrongs—but over Jesse Jackson we have had to agree to disagree. Here, the way in which we disagree is a result of Ernie's Catholicism. I cannot forgive "Hymietown." I don't even want to. Ernie can, because he believes, always, in redemption. And yet, Ernie agreed not to vote for Jackson, because he takes completely seriously promises—to him sacred promises—he made when we were married. He keeps them, holding the life we have in common above our separate backgrounds and different conclusions. He honors me, and in the face of anti-Semitism I am afraid. All my life, I have been taught that it *can* happen here. My husband credits what we do not share. I think he does so not only because of the trust between us but also because of his religious experience: Ernie believes in the reality and importance of that which you cannot see or touch or taste.

On other political and ethical issues, we have learned from each other through osmosis. In the case of abortion, for example, we seem to think as one: abortion should be legal, is generally undesirable, and is a matter for individual conscience. If I wanted an abortion, I'm sure Ernie would support me, and fairly sure he wouldn't agree with me; but I'm also pretty sure it will never come up, because I'd hate to have an abortion. Here, the prolife and prochoice forces would do well to emulate us—in this instance our marriage is a model of ecumenism and political compromise, achieved through love of one another.



I'm always quoting Churchill, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except all those others that have been tried from time to time." I quote it a lot on the subject of marriage, another very imperfect institution, but the best, as far as I can see, for most of us, most of the time. And like democracy, marriage is a chance to learn from someone different from yourself. Catholics and Jews have a lot to learn from each other. Most of it boils down to how much the same we are, but like other complicated understandings, the details are worth as much as the synthesis, and take a long time—probably a lifetime—to accumulate.

When my husband and I were first in love, first married, we did not want there to be differences between us. The idea of being separate frightened us, when we had promised to bind ourselves together. And with religion especially we did not want to acknowledge disagreement—it seemed too much like reading labels. But I'm forty-four now, almost forty-five, so I've lived through and struggled with sadness and defeat, as well as joy and hope. I recognize much of what I've been through and what I face as common human experience and therefore I find myself, lately, eager to declare myself as a Jew, and to return to the formal observance of the religion in which I was raised. I'll probably join a temple. My children have asked to go to Friday night services. The first time I took them—Ernie came too—we had the time wrong, and arrived late. As we walked in, the congregation was reciting Kaddish—the prayer in memory of the dead. The rabbi read names of people who had died recently, and those whose Yahrzeits (anniversaries of deaths) fell that month. She read the name Bertha Marget Krinsky—my aunt, who died in childbirth sixty years ago, when my mother was fourteen. It was Ernie who first heard the name. Our children were astonished, excited. I explained it as coincidence—it happened that this was the month in which my aunt had died, but although I hadn't thought about it, this was the temple my grandparents had belonged to. It was all perfectly explicable. Nevertheless, I was excited and astonished, too. So was everyone else I told.

When I told Ernie, still a churchgoer, that I thought I might start going to temple, he asked why. After all, I'd never been interested in going before.

The fact is, I've changed my mind through living with Ernie's faith; I'd be obstinate not to see its strength and beauty. I answered that I wanted to go for the children, I wanted to stand up and be counted, that most of all I wanted religion for the enlightenment and consolation I see it brings. □

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THE MYTH OF SELF-INTEREST

HOBBES HAD IT WRONG

MICHAEL J. HIMES &
KENNETH R. HIMES

In 1980 Ronald Reagan asked voters the question, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" Pundits agreed it was a clever and pointed way of evoking the dissatisfaction of voters with Jimmy Carter's administration. The assumption behind the question was simple: Americans vote in their economic self-interest. The fact behind the question was that the inflation of the late seventies had hurt a great many people. Ergo, Reagan's question was a useful debate tactic.

Ronald Reagan's assumption was and is the conventional wisdom in politics: voters are economically self-interested, and the state of the economy goes a long way toward determining the election results. We have no quibble with the second half of the conventional wisdom. The economy is a powerful political issue. But concerning the first half we have our doubts. Our skepticism is based on studies cited in a recent volume, *The Power of Public Ideas* edited by Robert Reich (Ballinger, 1987, $19.95, 272 pp.), which has led a variety of political scientists to question how much economic self-interest influences voting.

If self-interest were uniquely powerful, then there should be clear and direct correlations between how a person votes and how his or her economic standing has changed between elections. As Harvard political scientist Steven Kelman reports, no such correlations appear in the recent empirical studies of social scientists. Correlations do appear, however, between voting behavior and how an individual perceives the economy in general. In other words, there is evidence that citizens vote not with an eye focused primarily on their own pocket but on the state of the economy as a whole. These studies on the effect of self-interest on voting are supported by other studies on self-interest and policy views. On a range of issues both foreign and domestic, Kelman cites evidence that political ideology is a better predictor than self-interest of what policy a person will support. The prevailing assumption of political and economic self-interest is an unreliable one if these recent studies are correct. But this assumption is so often accepted as self-evident that even to question it seems bizarre. Why should this be so?

It was Reinhold Niebuhr who quipped that original sin was the one empirically verifiable Christian tenet. All one had to do, maintained Niebuhr, was observe one's neighbor. For the great Protestant theologian and his followers, original sin was the religious symbol cited to explain self-interest in politics. Within the school of "Christian realism" the Fall is used not only to explain but to justify political and economic arrangements premised on self-interest. Anything else would be open to the charge of naiveté, the worst failing of nonrealists.

Political and economic systems always embody an understanding of the human. Liberalism and capitalism, with their emphasis on self-interest, are founded ultimately upon a theological anthropology quite different from that which grounds a model of political economy which stresses community. (The term "liberalism" is , of course, not used here in the constricted partisan meaning which it has in contemporary American politics. In its traditional sense, liberalism refers to a perspective in political philosophy, especially within the English-speaking world, which abstracts the person from community, sets individual freedom and rights at odds with the community, and correspondingly stresses contractual theories of society. This meaning of "liberalism" encompasses political philosophers as different as Robert Nozick and John Rawls.) The divergence between liberalism and communitarianism is based on which theological symbol one emphasizes, original sin or the Trinity, when discussing what has happened to the image and likeness of God in human nature. In an earlier article (*Commonweal,* March 14, 1986) we discussed the import of the Trinity as a political symbol. Here we wish to take up the doctrine of original sin in the context of a Catholic political theology. By no means do we intend to suggest that a theological doctrine can determine or explain the political and economic history of a nation. We simply suggest that a particu-

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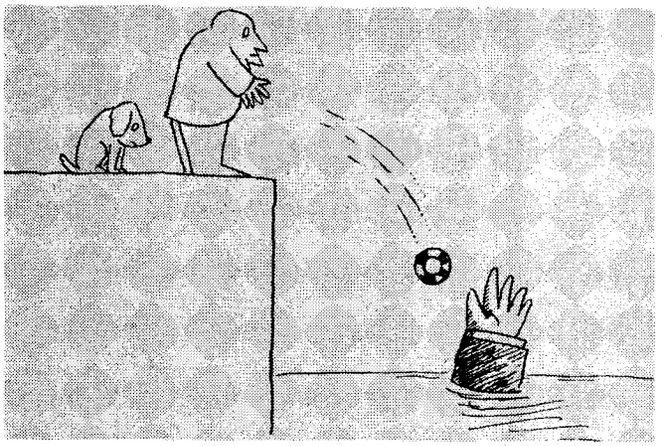

lar theological position may be in accord with one political or economic theory and not with another.

To ignore original sin is naive indeed, and the communitarian vision found in Catholic social teaching certainly does not do so. But how one "unpacks" that great religious symbol is crucial for the social ethic one endorses.

The Reformation debates on grace and justification necessarily entailed some description of humanity "in the state of nature," that is, deprived of grace after the Fall. However much the Reformers differed among themselves on issues such as eucharistic theology and ecclesial polity, they agreed on the utter corruption of the human person as a result of the sin of Adam. Luther's description of the human being as "turned in on himself" expressed the conviction that the Fall had destroyed the capacity for genuine other-directedness. The Formula of Concord (1576) held original sin to be "so profound a corruption of human nature as to leave nothing sound, nothing uncorrupt in the body or soul of man, or in his mental or bodily powers." In 1619 the Synod of Dort, which set the main lines of Calvinist orthodoxy, taught that after the Fall the human being was left in "blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment; became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in all his affections." Although some glimmers of natural light remain by which humanity has some knowledge of God, natural things, and morality, human beings pollute this light and are incapable of using it correctly "even in things natural and civil." This is echoed in the Westminster Confession's declaration that fallen human beings are "dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," and have become "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." The individual, radically turned in on himself or herself and closed to any possibility of agapic community, is locked into selfishness.

Obviously this doctrine of total depravity as a result of the Fall has been much developed in the course of the four hundred years which separates us from the classical Protestantism of the sixteenth-century Reformers. But it is that theological anthropology which, in its secularized form, found eloquent voice in Thomas Hobbes. In an article in *Commonweal* (January 15, 1988), David Carlin referred to Hobbesian anthropology as a secularized version of the Augustinian anthropology. In fact, that is partially true. The anthropology which undergirds Hobbes's social ethics was Augustine read through lenses ground by the Reformers.

Probably Hobbes's most often quoted statement is his characterization in *Leviathan* of life in the state of nature as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." He undergirded that dark description by appeal to seventeenth-century physics. "Life itself is but motion," and "when a thing is in motion, it will eternally be in motion, unless somewhat else stay it." What stays the motion of human life is the competing motion of another human life. The equality of human beings inevitably generates competition which, fueled by greed, the desire for security, or the hope of glory, produces the natural state of human beings: "they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man." Entry into civil society is necessary to control the worst excesses of this war of all against each. Membership in civil community allows each person to acquire and enjoy the secure possession of goods both physical ("gain") and intellectual ("glory"). Because it is to the individual's advantage to enter into community with others, the basis of human community is not love but self-interest. "All society therefore is either for gain, or for glory; that is not so much for love of our fellows, as for love of ourselves." If society is merely the controlled war of each against each, no *common* good exists, only a collection of competing individual goods, some of which may from time to time coincide.

A century and a quarter after *Leviathan,* Adam Smith attempted to introduce the idea of the common good into the Hobbesian vision of society as barely controlled war. In this effort, he was one of many social ethicians in England, Scotland, and France who had sought to escape from the gloomy picture drawn by Hobbes. Some, like Bishop Cumberland, argued that self-interest is prevented from driving individuals to the universal civil war which Hobbes had described as the state of nature by the balanced design of the universe. Others, like the Earl of Shaftesbury, traced that balance within the human being and claimed that self-interest, mighty power though it be, is counterpoised by other human passions. And others, like Pierre Nicole, maintained that *enlightened* self-interest, through the exchange of services, produced an earthly society so just and equable that it is indistinguishable from the community of saints, save that it lacks the infusion of charity. Smith turned the problem into the solution: self-interest could be relied upon to check itself because of the common human desire for a correspondence of feeling with others or what he termed "sympathy."

Smith had no doubt that human beings are motivated by self-interest. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest," he wrote in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.* "We address

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ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages." But the interests of the self are not only material; each person requires for his or her well-being some sense of self-worth which comes from seeing the feelings of others in harmony with one's own. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith acknowledged that, to achieve that sympathy which the individual requires for his or her own good, one may even "humble the arrogance of his self-love, and bring it down to something which other men can go along with." Thus self-interest, pursued with a sufficiently deep understanding of what the self is and what its full range of interests embraces, serves the common good.

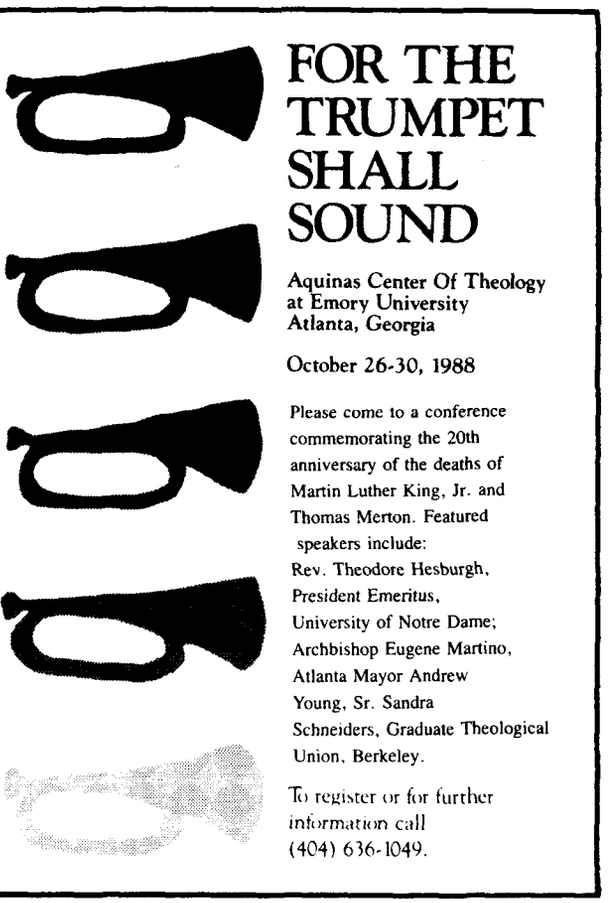
Nothing so effectively furthers sympathy, the ability to share others' perceptions of themselves and of oneself, as the need, Smith would say the drive, to "truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another." Thus the freedom of trade for which Smith strenuously argued in *The Wealth of Nations* is necessary for the achievement of human community, because through it sympathy among human beings is accomplished. His advocacy of free trade was a moral stance, and his economic work was an outgrowth of his social ethics.

The "invisible hand" of the free marketplace is the mechanism of this transmutation of self-interest into the service of the common good. "Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society." Smith's treatise on economics can be read correctly only in conjunction with his theory of social ethics. His concern was to resolve the problem of the common good within the Hobbesian framework which postulated self-interest as the sole human motivation.

Thus the denial of the possibility of altruism as a motive in human affairs was tacitly accepted even by those who rejected the social and political consequences which Hobbes drew from it. Behind and below Hobbes's denial of that possibility lies a secularized doctrine of the effects of original sin. But the form of that doctrine had been rejected by Roman Catholicism.

Catholic doctrine acknowledged the tragic consequences of Adam's sin but insisted that the human being remained essentially intact after the Fall. Adam lost "the holiness and justice in which he had been constituted" and "incurred the wrath and indignation of God" and "was changed in body and soul for the worse," the Council of Trent taught. But human beings are not utterly corrupted and "free will, weakened as it was in its powers and downward bent, was by no means extinguished in them." Indeed, Trent specifically condemned the opinion that all human works done "before justification" (Hobbes's "state of nature") are sinful, that is, purely self-interested. Later in the sixteenth century, disputes about the sovereignty of grace and the status of human freedom led to the teaching that the original justice and holiness of Adam were "accidental," not intrinsic to the human person as human. This original justice and holiness were lost as a result of original sin, but since they were accidental qualities, human nature remained essentially unimpaired. As some Counter-Reformation Catholic theologians phrased the point, the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, might lose that likeness, consisting in original justice and holiness, but retained the image of God. Beneath these Counter-Reformation statements lies an important claim about the meaning of human existence.

Deeply ingrained in the Western Christian tradition is the Augustinian insight that, as creatures who exist solely to be the recipients of the divine self-gift, our hearts are restless until they rest in God. This insight was echoed in the central point of Thomas Aquinas's theological vision, that at the core of human existence is a natural desire to see God. Thus there is a connaturality between nature and grace; nature has an aptitude for grace. Extinguish this restlessness, this desire for the beatific vision, and what remains is no longer a *human* being. Original sin may have distorted this restlessness, it may have skewed the direction of this desire, but it has not undone God's creation: humanity remains *human*. The longing for *agape* is experienced in the call to be agapic, the call to give oneself away. Consequently, Catholic doctrine has insisted in opposition to the darker views of the Reformers that the human being, made in the image of God who is *agape*, remains in that image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even after the Fall and so is capable, even if with great difficulty, of genuine other-directedness.

The secularized theological anthropology which underlies Hobbes's social ethic and which Smith accepted is classically Protestant. If one were to develop a secularized theological anthropology of the Catholic view of original sin, what social ethic emerges? Unlike Hobbes, a Catholic-inspired model of society will acknowledge a need not only to minimize and restrain the evil of self-interest but also the challenge to maximize the good of self-giving. Because Catholics believe that the most important word we say about the human is grace, not sin, strategies for community must be given priority over concern for limiting or channeling self-interest. That is why Roman Catholic social thought has traditionally posited that humanity is social by nature. In the words of the economics pastoral, human dignity is "realized in community with others." Thus, a fundamental characteristic of Catholic social theory is its stress on the necessity for persons to express their social nature through the institutions they create to order their lives. Political and economic institutions premised on the primacy of self-interest can never embody the theological vision of a good society in the Catholic tradition.

We do not claim to be able to construct a complete political and economic ethic reflective of the theological anthropology of the Catholic tradition. What we shall offer here are several comments on what a social ethic in accord with a Catholic theology of original sin might look like.

When the American bishops wrote their letter on economics, they asked two questions in the early draft of the pastoral: What does the economy do to people, and what does it do for people? In later drafts and in the final version a third question was put: How do people participate in the economy? The addition of this third question highlights the centrality of participation for any communitarian social theory. For other-directedness to be encouraged, there must be occasions and places where such self-giving is evoked and endorsed. People must be called and allowed to participate in the life of the community so that they can contribute to the common good and thereby give expression to their social nature.

Put one way, this call for active participation offers a rationale for insistence on subsidiarity and pluralism in Catholic social teaching. These two staples of Catholic social thought suggest that an abundance of human associations and groups should be allowed to flourish in a society so that persons will be able to find a wide array of institutions that give form to participatory community in the various realms of human existence. Furthermore, the bias is toward the grassroots when deciding at what level policymaking should occur in an organized group. This is to insure that even a well-meaning paternalism does not eviscerate the participation of people in the life of the community.

Put another way, this perspective on participation explains the increased attention given to rights-language in Catholic

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social theory. Unless people are able to enter into the life of the group in a meaningful way there are reduced opportunities for self-donation. Human rights, be they political, economic, or social, are statements about the conditions needed for participatory community to be realized. Human rights in Catholic teaching are moral claims which ought to have legal standing because they are claims to goods which are necessary for the person to participate with dignity in the communal life of a society. This is what distinguishes the Catholic tradition on human rights from the individualism of liberalism's appeal to rights. In Catholic theory rights-language is contextualized by the moral imperative of participatory community.

2 When the aim of social organization emphasizes the promotion of the common good as much as the regulation of self-interest, a more positive theory of the state is possible. A communitarian vision permits a broader range of government activity since it can argue with consistency that the state may take a more active role in the life of a people. Thomas Aquinas, unlike Luther and Calvin, stressed three aspects of law. For Calvin and Luther, law has two aspects: it serves to convict us of our sin and restrains the sinful self from destroying society. While both knew of the Thomistic position neither developed his third dimension of law as a means to promote the common good. Hobbes and Smith took over the Reformers' minimalist view of the state: Hobbes because of the negative light in which he cast social life and Smith as a result of his conviction that the state hindered the eventual good to be achieved by self-interest. Because neither gave a central role to altruism in social life, neither saw a positive role for the state. Why should the state encourage self-giving in social life when such behavior is either impossible, as with Hobbes, or unnecessary, as with Smith?

The use of public funds to promote artistic endeavors or to provide tuition assistance for those in private schools are examples of how the state may have a more positive role in society than liberalism admits in theory. If the government has but a minimal role how can it subsidize museums, theater companies, art exhibits, or private education? Some citizens may argue that such activities promote the well-being of each citizen and therefore it is correct for liberalism to use tax revenue for the sake of the arts or private education. The difficulty with this position is that large numbers of individuals acknowledge no personal benefit from such state activity and even disavow any interest in supporting such institutions. Such objections strike us as consistent with the creed of liberalism: it is not within the state's purview to promote the arts or education unless it is demonstrable that such activity is in the self-interest of citizens.

Calling upon individuals to help finance programs from which they derive no clear and direct benefit is difficult for liberalism to justify as is demonstrated by the attacks upon the welfare state found in the writings of Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Robert Nozick. Catholic social teaching, in contrast, by its appeal to the values of participatory community, the common good, and the role of the state in promoting such values, offers a different set of arguments to assess the propriety of state activity in areas like welfare policy, education, or public support of the arts.

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3 A communitarian social theory yields a richer understanding of the reasons people act. Self-interest is insufficient to explain public behavior. This is especially clear when people act so as to confound the logic of self-interest. The Catholic vision of the person, which admits the resiliency of the image of a self-giving God in the human, offers a more adequate basis for social ethics than a univocal emphasis on original sin. Our lives are more complex than the "realists" propose and self-interest does not do justice to the feelings of loyalty, duty, and affection which we experience in social life. These and similar deeply felt motives for action are generated, at least in part, by communal experience.

Within that communal experience two dimensions stand out: the experience of solidarity by which a person identifies with a group and the experience of a symbol system which offers an interpretive value framework. Individuals have "reference groups" which provide a sense of belonging and identity. Loyalty to such a group will permit a person to overcome economic self-interest if the group's interest is at stake. In the same way, the presence of certain basic values

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may draw people away from self-interest if the value system adopted is oriented toward self-giving. Again, a number of studies mentioned by Kelman and another Harvard colleague, Gary Orren, have shown how factors other than self-interest determine political and economic activity.

A multidimensional account of motivation in politics and economics points out the importance of cultivating a public philosophy. If self-interest is the irresistible or acceptable norm for social action, then little attention needs to be given to the role of a shared philosophy within a society. And so liberalism allows an agnosticism regarding the common good and is content with various competing forces each trying to attain its own narrowly construed vision of the good. The role of government is simply to guarantee that the rules of competition are fair. A communitarian model, on the other hand, suggests that a central task of society is to search for shared understanding of the social good, and for policy judgments to be made about good and bad choices according to some agreed-upon standards of right and wrong action. A shared public philosophy forged through public debate is a vital social good. Self-interest cannot foster substantive public debate or all such conversation would be merely a smoke screen for individual self-aggrandizement. Liberalism not only denigrates the import of a philosophy of the common good but legitimates self-interest politically while capitalism celebrates it economically.

The task of the public leader in a communitarian model entails the promotion of debate so that a people can be galvanized behind ideas. This approach to political economy gives a central place to the influence of public ideas. There really are very few things in a democracy more powerful than an idea whose time has come. To be able to articulate an idea that resonates with a people's commitment to the common good is one of the most significant gifts a leader can bring to public life. To contribute to the development of a philosophy of the common good, however, is not the leader's task alone.

4 There is a vital role for voluntary associations such as the church in a communitarian model of society. We mentioned above two sources of motivation: identification with a given community so that one's interests expand beyond self-interest narrowly construed, and a set of basic values which claim our devotion. With regard to the first motivational source, a person can identify with poor reference groups as readily as with good ones. One of the aims of a church which is truly catholic is the creation of moral communities that stretch our particular loyalties to more universal concerns. This is an important goal, for we are always tempted to identify with more restrictive definitions of self that limit our concerns to family, neighborhood, nation, class, race, etc.

On the matter of core values, it is the experience of community which is an originating source of these values. The religious community plays a vital educative role in the shaping of a person's core values through its rituals, narratives, and symbols. Furthermore, it reinforces an individual's commitment to certain values by clarification of the connection between moral experience and deeply held convictions regarding the meaning and nature of God, creation, and human history. By its creedal and liturgical discourse the church provides a foundation for public morality so that political-moral choice can express one's self-understanding.

In a communitarian framework the church makes a contribution to the political life of a nation through the way it educates participants in the task of civic discourse. The church's political influence is not that of a voting bloc or religiously motivated interest group. By shaping the public philosophy of a people, the church helps to create the moral climate within which policy issues are framed and debated. And as a reference group that challenges individuals to replace self-interest with self-giving, the church enlarges the role that reasoned discourse is able to play in the life of the political body.

The myth of self-interest as the sole or, at least, always dominant motive in human action remains a cornerstone of liberal social and economic theory. That myth is rooted in a vision of human action which arises, we have argued, from a particular theological anthropology. A fundamental but often overlooked reason for the Catholic tradition's uneasiness with and criticism of liberalism is that Catholicism disagrees with that theological anthropology. What is at stake is not only a series of prudential judgments concerning social and economic policy but an understanding of what it is to be human. □

SCREEN

RERELEASED & REASSESSED

'THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE'

The Manchurian Candidate has made a remarkable reappearance. A critical success but box office failure in 1962, the film has been withheld from television, video, and theatrical rerelease because one star (and the film's co-producer), Frank Sinatra, objected.

It was John F. Kennedy who had pressured United Artists president Arthur Krim into backing what was then seen as an oddball "it-couldn't-happen-here" film. Krim, like Sinatra, had been a Kennedy supporter in 1960.

So why has Sinatra objected to the film's rerelease? According to some insiders, Sinatra has been motivated by nothing more than squabbles over profits with United Artists. According to others, Sinatra has felt uneasy about the film's treatment of political assassination after our politics began to suffer so heavily from it. Sinatra also withdrew *Suddenly*, a powerful film about assassination which Lee Harvey Oswald watched in Dallas in mid-November, 1963.

It is comforting to believe the "guilt" theory, less for Sinatra's sake than for the example it provides of someone in

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Hollywood considering the possibility that films aren't innocent.

Whatever Sinatra's motives, his permission to rerelease the film has meant that this classic of American political Gothic has been filling art houses throughout the summer in several major cities. It is now also available on video. What kind of time capsule is it?

The politics of the film are richly confused. It satirizes anti-Communist hysteria, but also ironically supports it. Angela Lansbury, in her best movie role, plays the scheming wife of a would-be presidential candidate (James Gregory) who flings about McCarthyite accusations of Communist associations and practices a crude, cartoonish Americanism. The plot pits this vicious pair against the earnest Senator (John McGiver), who says, "If you and your husband were paid agents of the Soviet Union, you couldn't be doing more to hurt America."

Through the twists of Richard Condon's novel and George Axelrod's screenplay, this point is validated. There are Communist traitors in our midst, the film declares, just not where you'd expect them. Joined with this is a haute Cold War caricature of Russian and Chinese agents working in cruel tandem. No one (the film was initially released around the time our first advisers went to Vietnam) had heard of their falling out. With sharp direction by John Frankenheimer (who has since outdone *Candidate* only with *The Train*), the film sadly recalls attitudes which cost us all so much.

More interesting than the overt politics is the Gothicism. Here, nothing is as meets the eye; soldiers surviving Korea, including Sinatra and Laurence Harvey (as Lansbury's Oedipally inclined son), puzzle out strange nightmares from combat experiences that provide the clues to a giant hidden conspiracy.

However fictional the specifics about actual assassinations, the film anticipates a mood of mistrust that has contaminated our national life since 1963. The final line of its last two segments is especially sinister. You leave feeling queasily defiled, and reminded of how often things have not been what they seemed.

Audiences today can also respond nostalgically to the style of the film, which is both wacky and literary. Some plot lines are completely forced and some dialogue is a hoot, with Laurence Harvey popping off with one classic (now hilarious) male-chauvinist comment.

Much of the film is so intelligent that one despairs over the decline and fall of what we can expect from Hollywood. There was a time, this screenplay declares, when writers weren't afraid to sound as if they or their audience had read a few books. Sinatra even gets to mention Orestes and Clytemnestra! That brings to mind the line in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) when a priest visiting the Hepburn-Tracy manse tells Sidney Poitier, a professor seeking their daughter's hand, "I have just read your article in *Commonweal*."

In 1962, *Commonweal*'s Philip Hartung reviewed the film, noting its combination of excellent acting and an unbelievable plot line. "*The Manchurian Candidate* is a rather risky film, one that gives an even more sleazy picture of American mores and politics than *Advise and Consent*," he wrote, referring to Otto Preminger's film of the Allen Drury novel. Nevertheless, despite *Candidate*'s improbable plot, Hartung wrote, "...some good movie-making and an outstanding cast succeed in giving the fantastic events a realistic tone."

This November marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of John Kennedy's death. Sadly, the passage of time makes *The Manchurian Candidate* look less risky than prophetic.

TOM O'BRIEN

Anne Porter

The Wall

I'm on a journey
And looking out the window of the train
At signs of early spring
Some of the trees
Have put forth flakes of leaf
Translucent, pale from winter
And the young rye
Is downy on the fields
The sky is overcast
There's little color

It must be windy out
Rivers and bays
Are chipped and chiseled with small waves
Here is a lake
And on it there's a fleet of swans
Bending their necks to feed
Or slowly sailing

Their ancestors
Were brought from England
To ornament the waters
Of country mansions
But now they have gone wild and multiplied
They nest in solitary places
Of their own choosing
It's there I've seen them
Shining like angels in the reedy ponds
Of the salt marshes near the sea

And now we're coming to a station
Where I look up
And see a high retaining-wall
Of rough-cut stone

And near the top of the wall
There are three words
That have been written carefully with black paint
The words are DIGNITY IN PESTILENCE.

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Little Gidding: 'Where prayer has been valid'

MARY FRANCES COADY

The road to Little Gidding, in the heart of Cambridgeshire, a remote corner of England, seems to lead nowhere. Eventually, past a couple of farmhouses, behind a row of bushes—a "hedgerow" as the English call it—one comes upon a tiny chapel dating originally from the seventeenth century and restored in the nineteenth. To its right is a small graveyard. In front of the chapel stands a tomb, mildewed, unmarked. That's all. This is Little Gidding.

The bare historical facts of the place are these: in 1625, a young man named Nicholas Ferrar left a brilliant parliamentary career in London and became a deacon in the Church of England. He moved to Little Gidding and, with several family members and a few others—about thirty people in all—established a Christian community which devoted itself to prayer, intellectual pursuits, manual labor, and service to the neighbors around them.

After Ferrar's death in 1637, the community carried on, but the rising tide of civil war in England threatened the little group. In 1646, Oliver Cromwell's Puritan troops, on the hunt for royalists who still clung to the established church, ransacked Little Gidding and burned the buildings to the ground. The community dispersed. The chapel ruins, the graves, and the unmarked tomb—Ferrar's burial place—were all that remained.

The place may have remained hidden, unknown to all but a few, had not T.S. Eliot visited it in May 1936, and had it not surfaced in his memory in 1941 when he was casting about for a fourth poem to complete the first three of his *Four Quartets*. "Little Gidding" became the title and context of the poem, which is the crowning achievement of Eliot's career as a poet. As a result, Little Gidding has become a symbol of the startling paradoxes that make up the Christian life.

When Eliot's memory of the "secluded chapel" surfaced, England was once again at war. The London blitz was

at its height, Eliot worked nightly as an air raid warden, and terror and uncertainty provided the background as he relived his experience at Little Gidding.

The first section of the poem is a reflection of Eliot's journey there. He meditates on the life of love that built and sustained the little community, but his experience is not one of unalloyed joy. There is both winter and spring, darkness and light, cold and heat, and the poet's soul is a "dumb spirit." He is surrounded by the death of the once-vibrant community, and his reflection on the carnage produced by a long-ago war heightens the tragedy of his country's present war. Although a "pentecostal fire" enflames "the dark time of the year," the little community, like the small band in the upper room who witnessed the birth of Christianity, was doomed to defeat.

In the second section the scene becomes the aftermath of a bombing raid. The destruction, "near the ending of interminable night," becomes a perversion of Christian efforts throughout history to keep alive the pentecostal fire. In the midst of the horror, his own "lifetime's effort" seems to lead to nothing but "bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit," and the futility of his life produces only a mute helplessness. On the universal level, war is linked to war throughout history, and the poet is seized with "conscious impotence of rage/At human folly."

There is only one alternative to the nightmare: "that refining fire/Where you must move in measure, like a dancer." In the midst of destruction, then burns the fire of divine illuminations.

In the third section a paradoxical insight enters Eliot's meditation. Reflecting on the wars in which his country has been engaged, he realizes that they are linked not only by a common horror, but by a common love. He explains this anomaly by quoting directly from one of the voices that spoke to Julian of Norwich in a mystical vision: evil is a necessary part of life, but in the end, "all manner of things shall be well." The people associated with the earlier war are linked "in a single party" with those who are dying in a war three centuries later. They are united by death and defeat.

The Eliot scholar Helen Gardner speaks of Little Gidding as "a place of defeat," and in this section we discover a further paradoxical insight: that in defeat is victory. This was how Christ came to victory, and his pre-eminent defeat

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unites and gives meaning to all the other defeats in history. Little Gidding, then, in the midst of loss and ruin, is actually a place of triumph.

The short, lyrical fourth section reveals humanity's two basic choices: the way of hope, which leads to love and self-surrender, and the way of despair, which leads to anxiety and terror. It is a choice of "pyre or pyre." To choose hope rather than despair is "to be redeemed from fire by fire." The redeeming fire is inflicted by love, "the unfamiliar Name"—God.

In the fifth section, all the positive and negative elements in the poem are brought together in a total agony and total ecstasy drawn and sustained by love. The poet reflects on his own writing of poetry and applies his reflection to life itself. The words, in a sense, transcend poetry. "Every word is at home," and the result is "the complete consort dancing together."

The poet crowns his passage on poetry with the startling phrase, "every poem an epitaph." Gardner says that the "defeat of a poet is seen here as the very condition of his existence." The poem and the poet and all humanity are, even while dancing at the still point, experiencing their own death. Yet life and death are "of equal duration," Eliot says, and because "history is a pattern/ Of timeless moments," all the countless moments of history—tragic, mundane, and ecstatic—become linked to *the* moment of history, the moment of Christ.

In the end, however, all of humanity throughout history is caught up in an eternal "now," forever ancient and new: "the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/and know the place for the first time.

The buildup of themes and images is so complex that it comes as a surprise to find that the ultimate condition is one of "complete simplicity." Its price is high, "costing not less than everything"; it is the condition of one who has been totally consumed by the love of God.

Finally, the "tongues of flame," which refine and purify us in agony, darkness, and defeat, "are in-folded into the crowned knot of fire." Once again, Pentecost signals the victory of humanity over evil.

"So while the light fails/On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel," the poet knows that the defeat and death of Little Gidding are the necessary condition for love.

During this year, 1988, the world of letters recognizes T.S. Eliot's many legacies as it celebrates the centenary of his birth. In "Little Gidding," Eliot has left us, among others, this legacy: he has presented a small and simple community, hidden in an isolated pocket of the world, then laid to ashes and dust, as a symbol of life and hope. A Christian paradox indeed. □

BOOKS

Two books, two views: read both

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, MORALITY, AND REALISM
John Finnis, Joseph M. Boyle Jr., and Germain Grisez.
Oxford, $39.95, 429 pp.

A FIGHTING CHANCE:
The Moral Use of Nuclear Weapons
Joseph P. Martino
Ignatius, $15.95 paper, 283 pp.

James Turner Johnson

The first of these books has produced a sharp buzz of activity among Catholic intellectuals debating the morality of nuclear deterrence, as well as a certain amount of attention among non-Catholics engaged in that same debate. The attention is well deserved; *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* is a rare combination of thoughtful and well-focused practical, political analysis, finely reasoned moral argument, and high Christian principle. The book is so well written and its argument, within the framework staked out for it, so compelling, that it hardly matters that it is wrong. This is a book that deserves to be read and reflected upon.

A Fighting Chance lacks the credentials that almost immediately made the first book so attractive to Catholic nuclear intellectuals: while its author is a concerned Catholic layman, he is not among the stars of moral theological and philosophical debate; the publisher is not an Oxford; while clearly written, this book's argument lacks the literary polish of the first book; it treats just-war theory (as a whole) as still a meaningful resource for making military judgments in the nuclear age; the title sounds bellicose, lacking the air of superior detachment of the first book; and the burden of its argument is not for nuclear disarmament but for a counterforce/war-fighting option and a deterrent built on that. With such negative credentials, it hardly matters that this book offers a far more knowledgeable analysis of contemporary nuclear weapons, a subtler understanding of deterrence, and a serious attempt to connect a moral argument based on traditional modes of reasoning to the ongoing evolution of nuclear weaponry and modes of defense that take account of such weaponry.

In brief, both books have shortcomings; both have strengths. Most readers of the one will tend not to be attracted to the other. The task of this review, then, is to identify the shortcomings and strengths of each and to argue that both books should be read, and their analyses

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and arguments considered in tandem. Such, after all, is what is meant by the concept of an intellectual debate.

Finnis-Boyle-Grisez is as much about how to carry on correct moral reasoning as about nuclear deterrence and realism. Its target is "consequentialism" or "proportionalism," especially (but not only) as present in contemporary Catholic moral theology. Against this is set the authors' own method of moral argument by analysis and deduction from stable principles. Broadly, this means that the end does not justify the means; rather, means are justified by whether they conform to the relevant principles. Applied to moral analysis of nuclear deterrence, this means that a deterrent resting in whole or in part on an intention to kill enemy noncombatants cannot be justified, in the authors' view, by the claim that only this kind of deterrent keeps nuclear war from happening. Rather, the intention to kill noncombatants is morally wrong as such, following from a principle in the "common morality of the Judaeo-Christian tradition" that excludes intentional killing of the innocent.

I will leave to others a stringent analysis of the argument over method in moral reasoning. It should be noted, though, that the dispute is neither new nor likely to be settled soon, and that the particular application of both methods to nuclear weapons is also not new. Paul Ramsey, in *War and the Christian Conscience* (1961) and subsequent works, argued against countervalue targeting via the "principle of discrimination," his preferred term for the need to avoid direct, intentional targeting of noncombatants. Michael Walzer's "supreme emergency" argument in *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977) is often cited (as it is by Finnis-Boyle-Grisez) as a favorable example of consequentialist reasoning applied to what is allowable in war.

In a more leisurely discussion of Finnis-Boyle-Grisez's method, it would have to be shown how, compared to Ramsey, these authors fudge the "direct and intentional targeting" standard by insisting that targeting (direct or indirect) is not the major question. For them, the issue is rather the inevitable harm done to noncombatants in the area of a nuclear blast. They expand the concept of intentionality beyond what Ramsey would have accepted—to include foreknowledge about the nature of the target (e.g., Moscow's population, not merely its military targets). (See chapters IV-VI.) It would also have to be shown how, in comparison to Walzer, the central issue is not really consequentialism in method but a dispute over the absoluteness of noncombatant immunity as a principle. (See, for example, pp. 242ff.) I believe they are wrong on both matters.

Like Ramsey, I find a significant moral difference between directly targeting noncombatants (as in the case of countervalue strategy) and aiming at legitimate military targets even while knowing (but not intending) that indirectly, noncombatants are likely to be killed as well. Finnis-Boyle-Grisez's position on this correlates, I think, with their tendency to disregard the moral importance of technological changes toward smaller nuclear warheads and delivery systems of higher accuracy, both of which make more credible—and morally significant—the official United States position that noncombatants are not targeted as such by our deterrent forces. When nineteen missiles are aimed at military targets in Moscow, Finnis-Boyle-Grisez argue these are distinctions without a difference; I disagree.

Like Walzer, I also question the absoluteness of the noncombatant immunity principle in Western moral doctrine on war. On this point the crucial move is Finnis-Boyle-Grisez's conflation of this principle (which is historical, contingent, and derives from prudential considerations quite apart from religion) with the absolute moral principle, "Do not slay the innocent and righteous" (as stated in Exodus 23:7). The two principles certainly overlap, and the historically developed principle of noncombatant protection clearly depends, in Western culture at least, on the continuing strength of the absolute religious principle against harm to the innocent. But the concepts are not identical. One is religiously based, the other need not be.

The crucial locus on the question in Finnis-Boyle-Grisez's argument is chapter IV, where the authors attempt to draw the two principles together and, in my judgment, reason eloquently but not persuasively. While I share their preference for moral argument that moves from principles to judgments rather than backwards from consequences to means, what they have in the principle of noncombatant immunity is a historically freighted concept not identical with the absolute Judaeo-Christian principle, "Do not slay the innocent and righteous."

There is obviously much more that could be said, given greater space, about such a rich and provocative work of moral analysis as this one. It is time, though, to bring into the debate the second book on which this review is focused. *A Fighting Chance* shares with *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* its moral method of reasoning from principle to conclusion (though Martino also employs consequentialist reasoning), its use of just war theory (though Martino's use attempts to be comprehensive, while Finnis-Boyle-Grisez's is restricted to the *jus in bello* principle of noncombatant immunity), and its melding of moral argument with an assessment of both nuclear strategy and the capabilities of contemporary nuclear weapons. The comparative strengths, however, are exactly opposite. Finnis-Boyle-Grisez is at its best in its elegant moral argument, while Martino's book is less an argument than a collection of quotations from the moral arguments of others, organized under the various rubrics provided by the just-war tradition. Martino's analysis of the available, the possible, and the likely in nuclear weapons, though, is educated, up-to-date, and informed by his military background, while the corresponding aspect of the Finnis-Boyle-Grisez book is focused on a more popular but less accurate conception of the military issues

REVIEWERS

JAMES TURNER JOHNSON's *books include* Can Modern War Be Just? *and* The Quest for Peace: Three Moral Traditions in Western Cultural History.

FANNY HOWE *is the author of* The Lives of a Spirit *and* Deep North *(Sun & Moon Books).*

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associated with nuclear weapons. The prudential judgments these latter authors make (and both books are all about prudential judgments) are thus founded on a poor assessment of the relevant military issues—a problem which does not flaw the moral argument as such but would, even without the above-mentioned problem in that argument, seriously fault the judgments that are made on its basis.

Martino, by contrast, knows that MAD (mutually assured destruction) is but one stage—and one component—in nuclear strategic doctrine, and that nuclear weapons and their delivery systems are neither monolithic in nature nor frozen into set forms but continue to evolve. While Finnis-Boyle-Grisez would agree with Martino's argument that "if war breaks out, the last thing we want is to be programmed for holocaust," the former authors—despite attempting to be hard-nosed about the possibility of Soviet domination of a denuclearized West—argue for strategic nuclear disarmament without examining the nature of the forces that—they admit—could still morally be employed for deterrence and/or defense. Martino's emphasis instead is to present the case for a war-fighting option based on "usable" nuclear forces (that is, low yield, high accuracy weapons, used with discrimination), missile defense, conventional forces, and civil defense.

But these books arise directly out of the contemporary Catholic debate over nuclear weapons and are aimed to contribute to that debate. Neither utilizes or engages the full range of writing on this subject, and neither attempts to address non-Catholic entries in the religious debate. A reader approaching these books with a *tabula rasa* would learn about the American Catholic bishops' pastoral, *The Challenge of Peace*, and a bit about papal and other Catholic teachings, but not about the official and semi-official positions taken by American Protestant groups, such as the Methodist bishops' *In Defense of Creation* or the statement of the American Council of Evangelicals. Nor would such a reader learn from either book that just-war theory is in fact an organically developing historical moral tradition, not a set of *a priori* rules or principles.

Nonetheless, these two books make informative and worthwhile new contributions to the continuing debate over morality and military policy. □

GOD SPEAKS: ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

REVELATION
Peggy Payne
Simon and Schuster, $18.95, 314 pp.

Fanny Howe

A good read is hard to find. *Revelation* is one, if the reader is interested in a contemporary experience of conversion. There is a plot, good-natured in its telling, and a message on the side of hope. Peggy Payne has written this first novel with a lot of help from her friends (according to an extensive list of thank yous in the Acknowledgments section) and with an unflagging determination to be fair to every character in the book.

She tells the story of Swain Hammond, a Presbyterian minister in a church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; he is married to an attractive, loving, and intelligent woman, Julie; they have no children. Swain is the essence of a civilized man in white liberal suburban terms. He is aloof and consistent (the two qualities seem to be conjoined). Underneath his exterior, however, is a troubled psyche. The only child of cold and clever parents, since early youth Swain has longed for God's presence to fill up the emotional void in his personality.

Suddenly, as the book opens, he gets what he wants, and more. God literally speaks to him, sending out by voice one unfinished sentence and then an unsettling one. Swain, being the honorable man that he is, reports this experience to his congregation who immediately believe he is having a breakdown. Another dramatic event occurs immediately—the blinding of a child of a close friend (a woman for whom Swain lusts); Swain involuntarily attempts a miracle cure which fails and reconfirms the congregation's earlier judgment on his sanity. A third dramatic event threatens to disrupt his marriage. And throughout all this are his changing relations with the people in the community, some of whom turn away from him and even want him gone.

Like her hero, the author has a good sense of balance and humor, and we are carried into Swain's world without a bump or hitch. We can trust the tones and tales to be just surprising and just predictable enough to make us relax. The issues—both theological and psychological—of Swain's experience with God are neatly resolved, mostly on the side of psychology. Like Saint Julian the Hospitaller, Swain has to kill his parents before he can transcend their influence and wholeheartedly witness God in the world. Unlike the ecstatic and mythic quality in Flaubert's story of that saint's conversion, however, this story is solidly built around the realism of its characters. It is conventional in form and style which has the effect of forcing a conventional resolution to its wild proposition. In fact the focus and language of revelation are not likely to be as tame as they are here. The illicit rhythms of a Hopkins or the cosmic cartooning of Flannery O'Connor are perhaps more convincing by virtue of their snapping the margins of the usual. Conventional forms cannot contain unconventional experience.

Payne is willing to try, nonetheless, as in the scene where Swain tries to heal the blinded boy, Jakey:

> Swain hears his own words slow, in a rhythm: "hea-ling power." Then other words: "Child, arise."
>
> . . . It keeps on happening: the pulse in his brain turned into a

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pump, throbbing, each surge bringing something liquid, flammable into him. The Level goes higher. His head is filling like a gas tank, a dam-breaking reservoir. He's going to explode. His hand is on Jakey's bare arm.

"Heal him, Lord."

"God, of all the universe, heal this boy." All the force that was pushing against him is running through him, taking him with it. I want to go. Let it happen. Make the boy open his eyes and look at me. This one thing out of everything I ever asked for.

It took courage to try to contain such a powerful moment in the framework she has erected, and up to a point it works. But in the end it seems that the same story could have been told without the voice of God; instead, an adulterous occasion or some other law-breaking act on the part of the minister, would have settled just as well the question of Swain's inability to feel. However, Peggy Payne has taken on a challenge and met it with grace and charm, and her Swain was a rewarding companion to this reader. □

IN BRIEF

BOOKS FOR BELIEVERS, *by Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., Paulist, $6.95, 135 pp.*

I suppose all of us recall certain books that changed things forever for us, that metamorphosed the world and our sense of place in it. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* was one of those for me. André Schwartz-Bart's *Last of the Just* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* were others. Only the last is included in Raymond Schroth's list of thirty-five titles "that every Catholic ought to read." No matter. These are the ones that have counted memorably for him (and his students), as he makes clear in a series of lively autobiographical essays introducing each one. Not a list of "Christian classics," Schroth's choices nonetheless exhibit his catholic and journalist's tastes, ranging from the Bible and C. S. Lewis's *The Four Loves* through Sigrid Undset's *Kristin Lavransdatter* and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* to works by Studs Terkel, Tom Wicker, J. Anthony Lukas, Henry David Thoreau, and Karl Rahner. The combinations, all eminently readable, are electric and may blow the mind—which is just the idea. D.T.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 482)

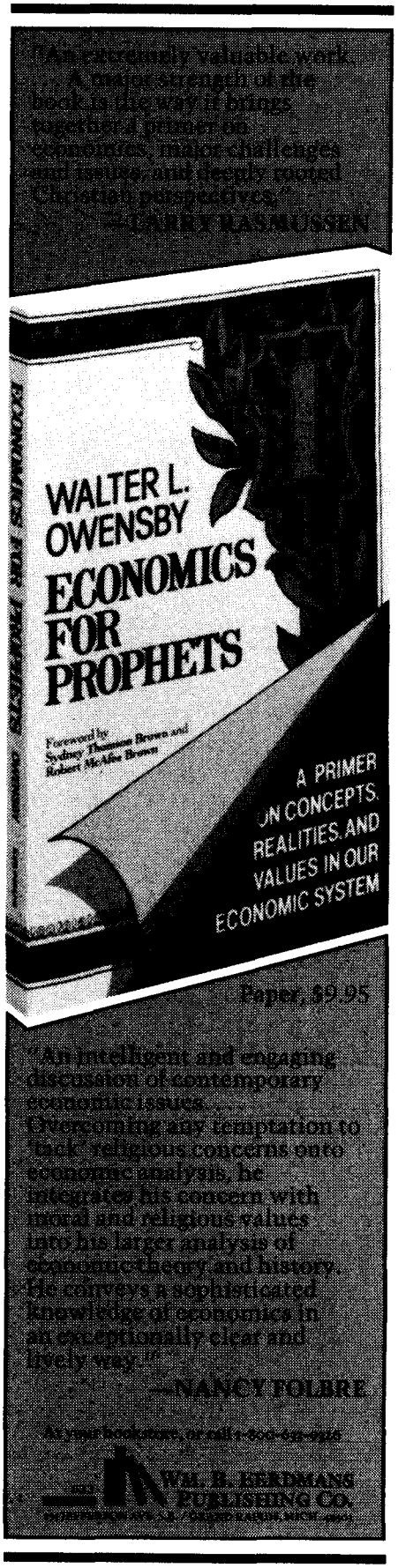
very least I am persuaded that I should cease and desist from expressing the kind of lofty disdain that once characterized my opinions on the subject.

Why? This is why:

1. I am fed up to the gullet with the colossal cop-out that the "contraceptive mentality" has become in the field of social injustice. Mention a problem of hunger, poverty, sickness, ignorance, unemployment, maldistribution of wealth and income, and immediately you hear this universal solution: contraception and abortion. (And how much longer will the conventional Catholic wisdom hold out against abortion?)

2. You also hear, and from progressive people who should know better, their clincher argument or "fact," namely, that the world is facing the stark, staring reality of overpopulation. Even your editorial implies that. This is a myth, a myth that has been exposed and exploded by food experts, most notably by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins in their book, *World Hunger: 12 Myths* (1986). Some of their conclusions: (a) "The world today produces enough *grain alone* to provide every human being on the planet with 3,600 calories a day. That's enough to make most people fat!" [emphasis added]; (b) *Less than half the world's arable land is presently cultivated;* (c) "In India, home of over a third of the world's hungry people, the reallocation of a mere 5.6 percent of current food production would wipe out hunger." In short, it seems that God's commandment to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28) is not yet outdated.

3. As Gandhi said, "There's enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed." Enough food, enough fresh air, enough clean water,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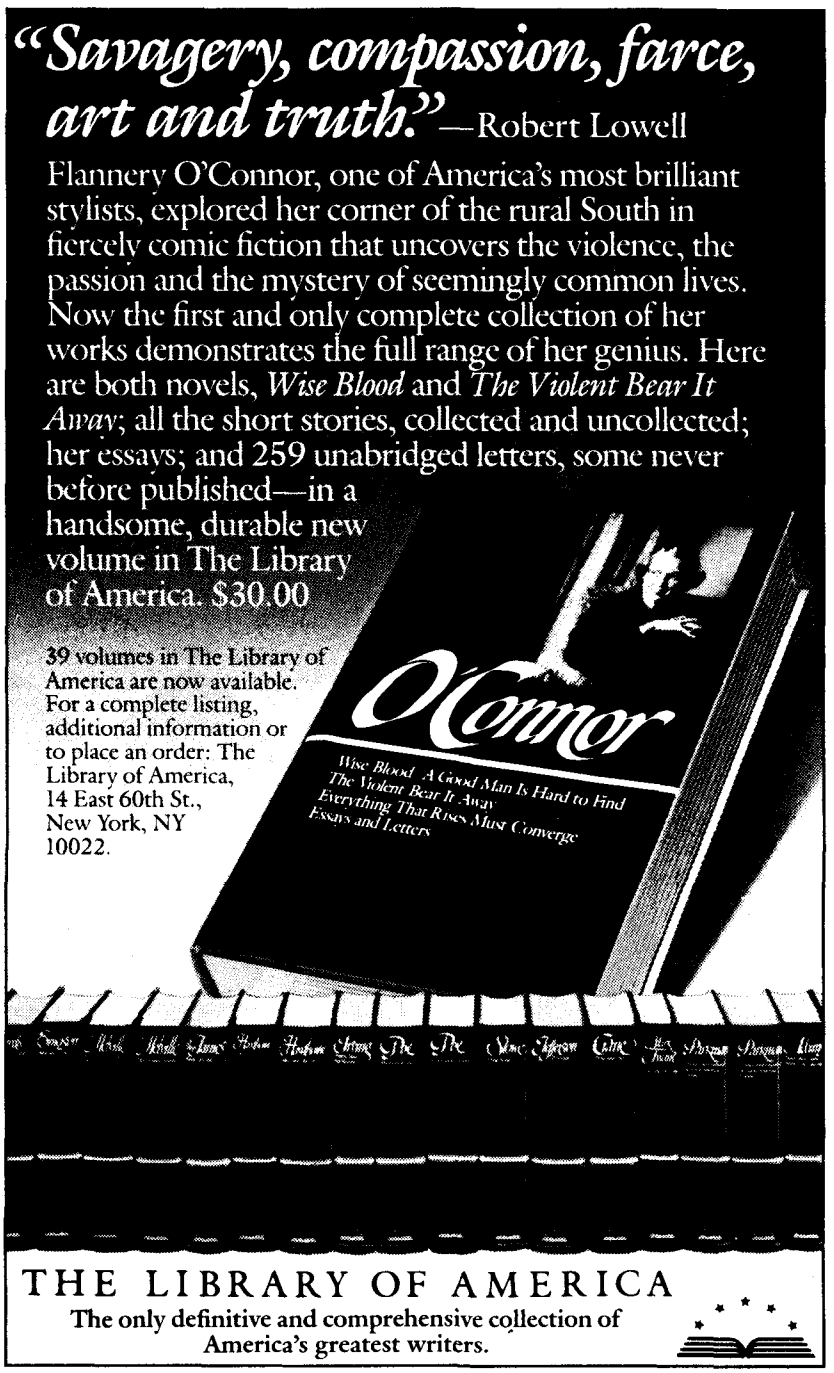
enough birds and animals, enough sources of energy. The problem is the control of greed and its conversion to a minimal regard for justice, the release of human genius from the production of destruction and its conversion to the production of those things that are truly useful and necessary.

4. I can no longer dismiss the pope's distinction between birth control by natural means (the rhythm) and unnatural means as illogical and irrelevant. There is something about Paul's argument for "openness to the transmission of life" that I find hard to ignore. There's a risk element there, true, but a kind of divine risk, a kind of divine logic and relevance.

5. True also, the rhythm sometimes misses a beat. But then, if it hadn't, we might not have had three or four of our children. And how could we, or the world, ever compensate for the loss of them? God knew better than we did.

JOHN C. CORT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Open to life

Beaumont, Tex.

To the Editors: The *Humanae vitae* "Anniversary Waltz" editorial and Robert Hoyt's "How Odd of God" shed more heat than light in your July 15 issue. There is the smugness of the phrase "the time has come to listen to mature Christians." Are you implying that NFP users are immature because they have chosen to integrate mutually their fertility into the sexual, covenant-sacrament of marriage? They do not see the concerns about the pill as "more arbitrary and ungrounded." The ascetical and relational value of abstinence or continence may not always be obvious or easy. It can be viewed as a "cross" *and* a blessing. Fertility is a gift, an *interpersonal* power to invoke life. Treating it as a disease is to disintegrate one's gift of self in marriage. It means that one's spouse, usually the wife, is responsible. This is "mature"? Chauvinism and sexism will continue as long as the fundamental sexual reality of couples is flawed by the unequal sharing of so beautiful and creative a gift.

However, women can be viewed as victims of "sexist" doctors (or their own husbands) in light of the documented side effects of the pill and I.U.D., all the while being sold on its freedom benefits! Which is more mature? . . . Moreover, if the "feminist drive for equality" is a "moral movement," why does it adopt such a masculine, domination-approach to fertility?

Hoyt is correct to point out that "not . . . much truth [is] to be derived from contemplating the intimate structure of the sex act." Its reference point is the covenant of marriage. The church's teaching on responsible parenthood and fertility regulation exists because of its concern about the integrity of marriage (in spite of the alleged theological or philosophical flaws in papal reasoning).

. . . Contraception appears to contradict the intimate, covenant promises of marriage. Even if the intentions are the same, the behaviors are different, though strictly speaking, continence is not a behavior. Those practicing NFP with a contraceptive mentality are in fact behaving

(Continued on page 510)

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RELIGIOUS BOOKNOTES

Catholic lives

Lawrence S. Cunningham

Apart from the sermonettes which make up the final two chapters of this book, there is little politics in this autobiography of the pugnacious Patrick J. Buchanan. His purpose, if I judge the book correctly, is to account for his passage from the middle-class environs of his Washington upbringing to the position of speech writer, spear carrier, and communications chief for the Republican presidencies of Nixon, Ford, and Reagan. His answer, lodged in the title of the book, is that he was a conservative *ab initio* who could write aggressively. He was a true believer with credentials that predated the Goldwater campaign of 1964.

Born into an middle-class family that would eventually number nine children, Buchanan chronicles his Washington, D.C. youth with enough precision to make his contemporaries—I am one of them—nod in recognition: to this day, for instance, like Buchanan, I have an almost irrational fear of an ether mask, based on my unhappy experience of operations in the days before sodium pentothal.

Right from the Beginning, *Patrick J. Buchanan, Little, Brown, $18.95, 392 pages.*

There is a writer's cliché about "hard-drinking, two-fisted Irishmen," but the cliché seems to come alive in this book. My overriding impression of this story is one of everyone hitting everyone else (Buchanan *père* strapped the kids who did not punch the boxing bag the requisite hours per week); of cars being wrecked with abandon; and enough episodes of drunken driving and disorderly conduct fines to drive a member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving to drink. Despite these chest-thumping rites of passage, Buchanan made it through Gonzaga Prep, Georgetown, Columbia's journalism school (where, improbably, he was a classmate of Miguel D'Escoto—now foreign minister of Nicaragua), and on to the newspaper business before his entry into the political world of Richard M. Nixon. Somewhere along the line he got married but, aside from a few angular references to his wife, we never learn when. This is a man's book.

Apart from his family, the single biggest influence on Buchanan's life seems to be the Catholic faith which he got from his parents. Trained by the Jesuits in that baroque scholasticism which once passed for Thomism, he remains a Catholic who pines for the autocratic days of Pius XII when we prayed at the end of Mass for the conversion of Russia. Unlike Garry Wills or Wilfrid Sheed who look on those days of starched surplices and weekly confession with ironic nostalgia, Buchanan can barely contain his rage at the tatters of the post-Tridentine church of his youth: when a young priest suggests the kiss of peace at Mass it takes all of his self-will not to clean his clock. That sort of thing.

Mario Cuomo is also a Catholic but his experiences with the church are quite different. Educated by the Vincentians at Saint John's in New York, and later a member of the law faculty of the same school, Cuomo's Catholicism seems less marked by what he learned from the fathers there than what he read in the late 1950s. According to McElvaine, Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu* had a decisive impact on Cuomo's thinking. The Teilhardian notion that things in this world, however haltingly, conspire towards the better in a teleological fashion, gives urgency to Cuomo's skill as a mediator and warrant for his unwavering belief that public service is not only a good but a vocation for the perfection of the world. McElvaine, in this rather adoring biography, makes it clear that Cuomo's religion is central to his political philosophy.

Mario Cuomo: A Biography, *Robert S. McElvaine, Scribners, $19.95, 449 pages.*

Buchanan's Catholicism is a classic example of that kind of religious sensibility which values a countercultural church as a bulwark against the slippery slope of secular society and a yardstick of moral certainty to combat the trimmers and dissemblers who yap at the ethical edges. Cuomo's religion, by contrast, sees religion and culture as interdependent, with religion pointing to the "not yet" of the future. One vision prizes clarity; the other can tolerate ambiguity. That simple datum helps us to understand why Cuomo so embraces the progressive Catholicism of the postconciliar era while Buchanan views it with profound suspicion. That this is a profoundly different view of things can be gleaned from a photo of Buchanan with President Reagan and Cardinal O'Connor at the White House while, we may guess, such friendly photos of the governor and the cardinal seem unlikely given their long-running *mano a mano* over abortion.

For all of their differences, both of these men are products of preconciliar

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. His books include* The Catholic Experience *and* The Catholic Faith: An Introduction.

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Catholicism and share, from that matrix, some similarities. Families loom large in their vocabularies (Cuomo has made it a central word in his political lexicon). Both got a classical education in the old Catholic mold with a resultant love for language, a taste for argument, and a deep conviction that language can persuade and convert. Their exposure to natural-law ethics brings them to moral conclusions not always shared by their partisans: Buchanan thinks that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was immoral; Cuomo resists the majority opinion about the death penalty. They break over the issue of public law and abortion but both find abortion as a direct attack on human life. Of the two, Buchanan seems less touched by his immigrant past (his family has southern roots and a long history in this country) while Cuomo, who has felt the prejudiced sting of the recent arrival (his parents and older brother were all born in Italy), is quite rightly sensitive to ethnic slurs.

American and Catholic contains essays by various hands on the proper relationship of Catholics and Amer-

American and Catholic: The New Debate, *edited by Joe Holland and Anne Barsanti, Pillar Books, $8.95, 122 pages.*

ican culture. Michael Schwartz, for instance, represents a "restorationist" view which demands that Catholics resist the pretensions of Americanism by being a prophetic minority against its secularized values. Schwartz cites Mario Cuomo's now famous Notre Dame speech as a triumph of the Americanist mentality in its willingness to put tolerance above principle as a way out of the abortion impasse. The editors counterpose the restorationist argument with what is called the "integrationist" model in which a new synthesis of the American experience and Catholicism is sought. Thus, longtime Catholic activist Ed Marciniak argues for a new theology of work and Catholic work ethic that emphasizes the this-worldly experience of ordinary people and is framed in a language that does justice to their aspirations. He quotes with approval the observation of an executive who notes that while we have a vocabulary to talk about the work of a Mother Teresa, we do not have a religious language to talk about the work of those who are in his employ. It is a nice point. The final perspective, borrowing promiscuously from everything from New Age Thought to the politics of the Green Movement, argues for a futuristic eco-theology not dissimilar to that proposed by Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox.

The problem with Holland's anthology is that it is so sweepingly given to generalization (Spretnak's essay on the Green party surveys culture from the neolithic period to the birth of the nation-state in three pages!) that it asserts more often than it analyzes. There is a good deal of conviction, passionately stated, but the level of theological reflection is not very sophisticated or sustained.

By contrast, Robert Wuthnow's sociological essay, surveying the character of American religion from the close of the Second World War to the present, is elegantly done. His major thesis is that the most prominent generalization one can safely make about American religion is that denominationalism has become less important in the past few decades and "special interest" movements more important. What that means concretely is that one identifies oneself less as, say, a Southern Baptist and more as a scriptural fundamentalist or a scriptural moderate who happens to belong to the Southern Baptist Convention. Such a shift also explains why conservative Catholics are often contributors to something like Jerry Falwell's ministries: they do not see Falwell as basically anti-Catholic but prolife, antipornography, etc. Try to imagine a Catholic in 1950 contributing to such ministries and you see Wuthnow's point.

The Restructuring of American Religion, *Robert Wuthnow, Princeton, $25.00, 374 pages.*

Wuthnow writes in the tradition of Robert Bellah, Clifford Geertz, Andrew Greeley, and Peter Berger which means, in essence, that he is profoundly dubious about any simple-minded secularization hypothesis as helpful in understanding American religion and, equally, is committed to seeing religion as a symbolic language which provides an overarching meaning schema for both individual and social life. Some of his best pages, toward the end of the book, are devoted to his analysis of the ideology attendant on technology (if all problems are seen as technological problems, then, it follows, all answers are technological ones), and the tension role of religion in relation to that ideology. If technology has given rise to a millennialist hope of an ever more perfect future (as Robert Nisbet has noted), it has also produced a legitimating myth about America's special role as a technological leader. The power of that myth has such a shaping influence on religious attitudes (and vice versa) that many scholars now

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turn to the Buddhist/Shinto tradition of Japan to explain its technological vitality.

Someone once remarked that sociology is only slow journalism. At its best, however, a certain kind of sociology is reflective and interpretative journalism. Wuthnow takes us through the American decades of the postwar period noting shifts and emphases in a way that is both enlightening and provocative. John Deedy's

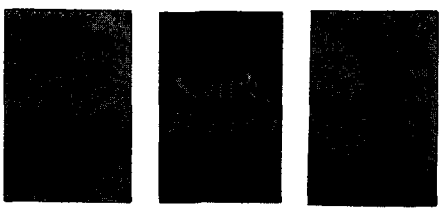
American Catholicism: And Now Where?, *John Deedy, Plenum Press, $18.95, 309 pages.*

American Catholicism is more purely journalistic in its attempt to trace the enormously stormy story of the American church in the past decade or so, especially in its attempt to be both Roman and American.

I have reviewed Deedy's book elsewhere, but rereading it for these notes in the light of Wuthnow's work raised some questions in my own mind. Deedy, once an editor of this journal, has given us a good journalistic account of the various tensions in the contemporary American church. He passionately believes that the Currans and Hunthausens are the best hope of the church as it moves towards the new millennium. In that sense, Deedy is a progressive Catholic, although he does not hesitate to point out the excesses of the progressive wing of the church.

The question that I ask myself is this: are many of those who line up in opposition to each other on some rather basic church issues working out of different "models" of the church or are they competing interest groups who dwell under an abstraction called, for traditional reasons, Catholicism? To say it another way: we know what separates the readers of the *Wanderer* and the *National Catholic Reporter*. What holds them together? Are their differences cultural, theological, ideological, or a *tertium quid?* Wuthnow, I suspect, would argue that the very fractiousness of American Catholicism supports his thesis of a weakened denominational sense and a heightened commitment to interests. While that may satisfy as sociological state of the question, it only means that there is a compelling need for a new Catholic synthesis which is radically traditional and radically current, drawing forth, as the gospel would have it, old things and new. What these books have in common is that they reflect, directly or indirectly, the urgent need for such a synthesis if we are not to dissipate our energies on in-house squabbles. □

FALL 1988



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(Continued from page 506)

in an "open to life" manner since they have not altered themselves or the sex act. This raises the question of which has more impact on the human person: values and attitudes, or behaviors.

I do not wish to downplay the struggles of many couples conscientiously resorting to contraception. I think some in the NFP movement could develop a bit more compassion in this regard. But I see church teaching as an invitation to wholeness in marriage.

CHARLES BALSAM
Office of Family Life Ministry
Diocese of Beaumont

A moral advantage

St. Paul, Minn.

To the Editors: I am disappointed in *Commonweal*'s assessment of *Humanae vitae* ["Anniversary Waltz" and "Sex: How Odd of God," July 15].

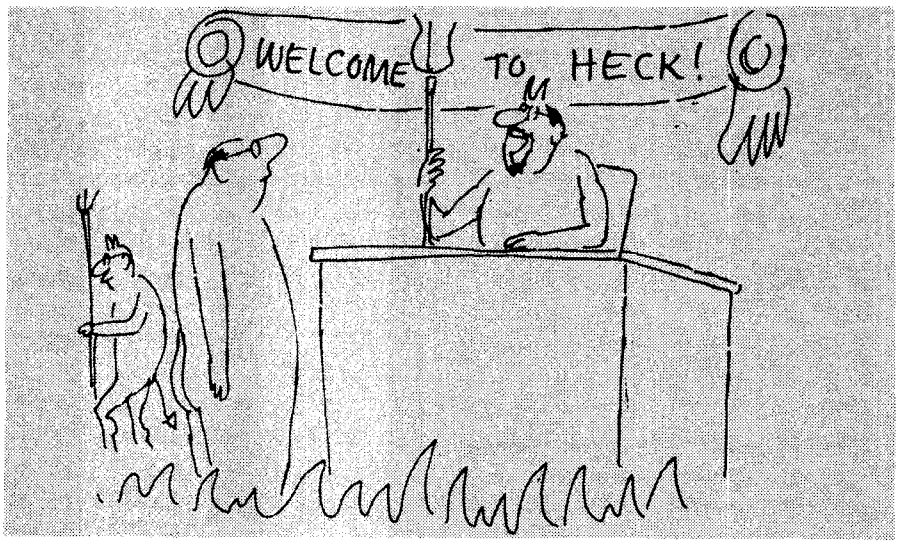
First, "recourse to fertile periods" is no longer equated with the rhythm method. Rhythm was already giving way in 1968 to the sympto-thermic and ovulation methods of natural family planning, both of which are very effective for avoiding *or* achieving a pregnancy.

Second, neither [the editorial nor] article acknowledges, much less engages, the rich teaching on marriage coming from the magisterium, from *Gaudium et spes* to the present: e.g., the need for marriage to serve the common good; the harmony between unifying love and self-giving love; the relationship between individual dignity and freedom and the human need for community and love; the fact that marriage engages the total person—body, instinct, feelings, aspirations, will, and thought—in a historical process of conversion and sanctification with a particular shape to it; and the identity between the family's being a community and its mission in society to extend community.

Third, *Commonweal*'s editors extol the goodness of marital sexuality as "a source of delight and comfort" and "the ability . . . to control the number of children." Both ideas are present in *Gaudium et spes, Humanae vitae*, and *Familiaris consortio*.

Finally, neither article nor editorial addresses the magisterium's rationale for the moral advantage of natural family planning over contraception, namely, that natural methods show more respect for the natural cycle of the woman and the couple's fertility and require a mutual effort of the husband and wife (*Familiaris consortio*, 32). If I read this correctly, John Paul II is advocating the fullest mutual bodily involvement of husband and wife, including the wife's menstrual cycle and the couple's fertility, as a moral advantage in the couple's love relationship and in the marriage's contribution to society. I think there is something of value here, and it merits our efforts toward further development. Let's not ignore it.

FRANK SCHWEIGERT



"No, this isn't Hell. This is Heck, where the non-cursers are sent."

The editors reply:

Frank Arricale is right: *Humanae vitae* has indeed helped some Catholics rise above our own church's special form of fundamentalism. We only wish this maturity had been acquired in a less costly way—both for individuals whose faith did not come unscathed through this crisis and for a culture left without persuasive guidance about sex.

Frank Schweigert is also right: the papal and conciliar documents he cites do contain rich material for reflection, deftly summarized in his letter. But he, like Messrs. Balsam, Sullivan, and Cort, seems particularly unwilling to address the core issues of either the encyclical or our editorial. The whole point of *Humanae vitae*—the topic at hand—was to pass moral judgment on the use of methods of contraception other than those that depend on detection of periods of infertility. The encyclical concluded that such use is "equally repugnant to the

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nature of man and woman, and is consequently in opposition to the plan of God and His holy will." The encyclical did not merely say that contraceptive methods deemed artificial are less good than those deemed natural, it said the former were objectively sinful.

Not proved. Not well argued.

And—the point of our editorial—there has been a tragic squandering of the church's moral resources to counsel a world paying, as we wrote, "the terrible human costs of our culture's disarray in sexual matters."

Charles Balsam comes closest to the argument between *Humanae vitae* and its critics when he tells us that people with a contraceptive mentality who use the techniques and technologies of "natural" family planning "are in fact behaving in an 'open to life' manner since they have not altered themselves or the sex act." This appears to exclude purposes and consequences (not just Mr. Balsam's "values and attitudes") from ethical judgment of human acts, and to accept bodily "behaviors" as a sole and sufficient norm. To us, this is not natural law reasoning but sheer physicalism.

Mr. Balsam's whole letter is unfortunately based on a misreading of our editorial. We did not write, "the time has come to listen to mature Christians," but "the time *had* come," referring to the midsixties and the majority voices on the papal commission. In any case, Messrs. Balsam and Schweigert, though they appear to claim more for NFP than statistics and many former practitioners would, clearly mistake our editorial if they read into it a judgment upon the choice individual couples made in 1968 or make now. What we said and repeat is that couples can and should make conscientious decisions, but that such decisions do not resolve "the dilemma in which the whole church now finds itself." The very authority question *Humanae vitae* tried to solve now confounds us with a vengeance. Reproductive and sexual ethics could use the wise and moderating influence of many, but not all, elements of Catholic tradition. But in defending the physicalist outlook of the encyclical and the authority of the papacy, Rome keeps that influence from being felt.

John Cort's letter criticizes a number of attitudes and policies that are as abhorrent to us as to him, which as a former editor and long-time reader of *Commonweal* he well knows. We don't know the "progressives" that Cort hangs out with, but the ones we know who concern themselves with developing countries see unchecked population growth as one factor among many in the continuing struggle for development. And only in very limited circles is contraception seriously proposed as what Cort calls a "universal solution" for the world's injustices. It testifies to the weakness of the central arguments of *Humanae vitae* that Cort defends them with such dust-in-the-eyes attacks on straw men.

Finally, while we recognize that *Humanae vitae* has its female as well as male defenders, we note for the record that we received no correspondence on this editorial from women.

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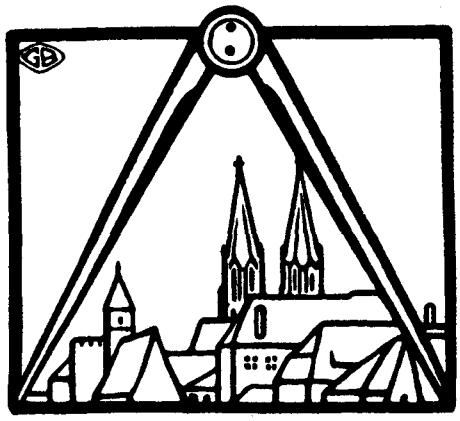
Social Change and Religious Commitment



Few on the secular Left understand the social dimensions of the Gospel, and the way the Catholic bishops, in their recent pastoral letters, placed economic democracy on the national agenda and nuclear disarmament on the nation's conscience. Few have paid much attention to the progressive social witness of Protestants. Few know what Christian activists are doing in Latin America, South Africa, South Korea, and in the ghettoes and barrios of our land. Few realize that the papacy has called for workers' ownership and self-management and that its economic views have acutely irritated apologists for big business. Few have considered the role of believers in the opposition to nuclear weapons and U.S. belligerence in Central America, and in the pro-democratic dissident movements in the East bloc.

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Those who write for us — pathfinders who straddle the fence between the "secular" and "religious" worlds — include such diverse beacons as Christopher Lasch, Walker Percy, Robert N. Bellah, John Lukacs, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Robert Coles, Michael Lerner, and J.M. Cameron. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy pigeonholing. *Newsweek* has called us "thoughtful and often cheeky," the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty finds us "lively," and the *Library Journal* has predicted we will "doubtless command increasing attention." If you think it's time to end the isolation of the secular Left from the religious Left, and vice versa, subscribe today!

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